

Chapter 9

St Joseph's Industrial School, Tralee ('Tralee'), 1862–1970

Introduction

History of the School

- 9.01** St Joseph's Industrial School, Tralee, was situated on the road to Ardfert on the western outskirts of Tralee town.
- 9.02** In May 1859, John Mulchinock, a Tralee draper, gave six acres of land to the Christian Brothers for the establishment of a boys' national school. The building commenced immediately at a cost of £4,500, paid for by Mr Mulchinock. It was opened on 28th April 1862, with 160 day pupils and two teaching Brothers.
- 9.03** In 1870, the parish priest, Dean Mawe, asked the Superior at that time, Br Vincent Hayes, to open an industrial school in Tralee, and it was decided to build it on the site of the existing national school. To make way for the industrial school pupils, the two classes from the day school were transferred to the Christian Brothers' School in Edward Street, Tralee. A building programme, part-funded by public contribution, was then undertaken to provide additional accommodation. A further 34 acres of land were acquired, and the School was subsequently certified for 100 pupils.
- 9.04** Within a year, in March 1871, that number had been increased to an accommodation limit of 150 and a certified limit of 145. A series of land acquisitions throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, culminating in the purchase of 16 acres in 1951, increased the size of the land available to 76 acres. A Visitation Report for 1970 recorded that, of the total 76 acres, 9 acres were Diocesan property and the remaining 67 were Congregation property. The buildings stood on the Diocesan property. The property was sold by the Christian Brothers to the Urban Council for what it was hoped was a 'realistic price', apart from 15 acres which were retained as playing pitches for the Green Secondary School.

Discovered documents and Investigation Committee hearings

- 9.05** The Investigation Committee obtained discovery of documents from the Christian Brothers, the Department of Education and Science, the Archdiocese of Kerry, An Garda Síochána, and the Health Service Executive (Southern Area). In addition, former members of staff and former residents furnished documentation and statements.
- 9.06** In preparation for the hearings, the Committee sent letters to 42 former residents listed on its database as having been resident in Tralee and wishing to proceed with their complaint as of September 2005. Of those, seven confirmed that they were not proceeding with their complaint, and replies were not received from a further 14 former residents.

9.07 The Investigation Committee heard evidence in three phases. In Phase I, which took place in public in January 2006, the Congregation of Christian Brothers outlined their submissions in respect of St Joseph's, Tralee. In Phase II, the Committee heard the evidence of 15 former residents and eight former members of staff. 21 complainants were listed for hearing, of whom six did not attend. The 15 hearings took place in private over five weeks. In Phase III, in May 2006, the Congregation gave its response to the evidence heard in the second phase. The Congregation furnished a final written Submission to the Committee in March 2007.

Photograph

9.08 The Committee has received the following photograph of Tralee:



Source: Congregation of Christian Brothers

Numbers in the School

9.09 During the years 1940 to 1969, the numbers in the School varied between a high of 152 in 1942 and a low of 35 in late 1969 when the School was closing. In 1968, the School had 94 pupils enrolled.

9.10 In 1944, in response to a request by the Department of Justice (via the Department of Education), the Resident Manager followed up an earlier request of 1941 by writing to the Department of Education confirming his willingness to have the school registered as a place of detention for youthful offenders. He agreed to accept eight boys without an increase in certification, and the Department subsequently confirmed this.

9.11 The problem of falling numbers remained and, as early as 1955, the Visitor discussed the uncertain future of industrial schools such as Tralee. The follow-up letter to the Visitation Report noted that the boys' apartments needed a 'bit of a clean up', but added that it was hard to 'forecast the future for such schools'.

9.12 The decrease in the numbers of children being committed to industrial schools was referred to in what appears to be an addendum to the 1961 Visitation Report:

The numbers in St. Joseph's, Tralee, are at present quite adequate for the economic running of the establishment. This is due to [the Resident Manager], it is said, who secured some thirty pupils from St. Philomena's Home Stillorgan for Tralee when that school closed down last year ... Both Glin and Tralee it seems, depend chiefly now on the junior Industrial School in Killarney for their supply. Local Councils and Boards of Assistance send a small number of cases each year. The number of children committed to these schools by the District Justices is said to be declining. Both District Justice in the Limerick and Kerry area are said to be antagonistic towards Industrial School education. Fosterage, boarding-out and adoption are now considered preferable as the children are not segregated from society and it is said that pupils from Industrial Schools find it difficult to adjust themselves to ordinary life. Neither Superior would agree that this is the case and they have statistics to prove it.

Both Superiors are of the opinion that heavy financial loss will be sustained if an amalgamation scheme is not prepared and effected at the beginning of the school year 1962-63 ...

Unless there is a change of policy on the part of District Justices and social workers it seems that the future of our Industrial Schools is rather uncertain.

9.13 The Resident Manager expressed his concern about the falling numbers to the Department of Education Inspector, Dr Anna McCabe¹, who noted the matter in her reports for 1960, 1961 and 1962.²

9.14 A meeting was held by the Department on 28th September 1965, attended by representatives from the Rosminian Order that ran the industrial schools at Upton and Ferryhouse, as well as the Provincials of both the St Helen's and St Mary's Provinces of the Christian Brothers. The Minister made the position clear:

the accommodation available in the schools was greater than the number of pupils and he wished to know whether the representatives would agree in principle to close some of the schools and thereby utilise the others more fully.

9.15 The Minister 'suggested tentatively' that Ferryhouse, Tralee, Salthill and Glin should be closed. The two Christian Brother Provincials agreed to the closure of Glin and Tralee, but no clear decision was made. The debate continued until 1966, when it was agreed that Upton and Glin would be closed, and Tralee kept open. In August 1966, the Minister signed Orders directing that 10 boys be transferred from Upton and 28 boys be transferred from Glin to Tralee. In fact, Tralee only stayed open for another three to four years after that, the last group of boys having left by 30th June 1970.³

9.16 Notwithstanding the temporary increase in numbers brought about by these transfers, the numbers continued to fall. The Kennedy Committee had been established and it was widely anticipated that it would recommend a gradual closure of industrial schools. A decision was made by the Provincial Council of St Helen's Province, to which Tralee belonged, that there would be no further admissions from August 1968 and that Tralee would close in 1969.

¹ Dr Anna McCabe was the Department of Education Inspector for most of the relevant period. See Department of Education chapter, Vol. IV.

² The Visitation Report for February 1960 records the total number in the primary school as being 119 and the Visitation Report for May 1961 gave the total number of boys in Tralee as 130, with 107 boys on the roll in the primary school.

³ The 1969 Visitation Report refers to 35 boys being still in the School, and the Opening Statement says that by 30th June 1970, the School had closed.

Where the boys came from

- 9.17** According to the Opening Statement of the Congregation, between 1940 and 1969 the courts committed 700 boys to Tralee. Between 1948 and 1967, a further 122 boys were referred to Tralee by the Boards of Health. Of those, approximately two-thirds came from Dublin. A third 'minimal' category of boys was those who were placed in the Institution on a voluntary basis and they were known as 'voluntaries'.
- 9.18** These 700 boys were committed because of destitution, homelessness, receiving alms and wandering. They were also committed because of improper guardianship and non-attendance at school. Because Tralee was a registered place of detention, a small number of boys were also sent there for criminal offences, such as larceny, house-breaking and malicious damage.

The daily routine

- 9.19** Numerous daily timetables for both the boys and the Brothers were set out in the Visitation Reports. The boys' day started at 7.00am and ended at 9.00pm, and the daily routine was the same as in all other industrial schools run by the Christian Brothers. The Saturday programme allowed some extra time for household chores and showers, distribution of bedclothes and additional recreation. A film was usually shown in the evening. On Sundays there was a talk from the chaplain or Resident Manager and a walk or, occasionally, attendance at local matches, although one Brother said that boys were not as a rule encouraged to attend them.
- 9.20** The Brothers' day started earlier, at 6.10am, and ended with Conference and night prayers at 9.20pm.

Resident Managers

- 9.21** As with other institutions, the Resident Manager affected the overall atmosphere of the Institution. There were seven Resident Managers in Tralee throughout the period of this inquiry. Five served for approximately six years, another served for two years, and a further Brother served for a matter of weeks in the late 1960s. The system of Visitation Reports was used to monitor the performance of Resident Managers, and the Brothers in the School could give their opinion on his work. The Visitor appeared not to speak to the boys and, therefore, their experiences and views were not taken into account.
- 9.22** In the 1950s, there were two Resident Managers who appeared to take a genuine interest in the School and who tried to improve conditions there. The first of these, however, was criticised by 'senior Brothers' who found him too interfering. The follow-up letter after one Visitation implied that he should place more reliance on his Brothers and recommended he refrain from interference, since it 'may produce much better results' in the Community. In the late 1950s, a Resident Manager was appointed who was noted for his kindness to the boys and the Brothers. A Visitation Report remarked that he was regarded as a 'kind father and guide' by the boys and the Brothers.
- 9.23** By contrast, a Resident Manager who was appointed in the 1960s was clearly unsuited to the role. This was recognised by the Visitor who came to Tralee six months after his appointment. That Visitor said that he was somewhat slow mentally and would require the advice and guidance of an alert senior Brother:
- Owing to his deafness, the present Sub-Superior leads a life somewhat apart but is always ready and willing to help. Nobody else on the present staff would be a good substitute.
- 9.24** The next Visitor said that the Resident Manager was 'inclined to remain too much in his office and it is said that he does not visit the school'. Much of this Resident Manager's work was left to the Brothers. The Report stated:

The Superior is kind and considerate with the community but it would seem that more generosity on his part towards the boys would have a very wholesome effect ... It has been pointed out to the Superior that it is necessary for him to assert his authority more. I can see that he has a good deal of office work to do between phone calls and callers and this perhaps distracts him from what should be his chief concern – the boys.

9.25 Subsequent reports criticise his lack of support of the Brothers and his lack of engagement with the School. In the final year of his appointment, the Visitor commented:

There would seem to have been a general neglect in the upkeep of the premises and rightly or wrongly I place this at the responsibility of the Superior ... I have the impression that the Superior is a lazy man; he has no school work and, as far as I can find out, very little supervision duty. This puts much extra work on the staff. In short the place has needed a leader.⁴

9.26 The Visitor described the School as a ‘most depressing establishment’.

9.27 During the years of this Resident Manager’s tenure, a number of serious allegations came to light and were poorly handled by him. These are dealt with in more detail later..

9.28 The post of Resident Manager was central to the functioning of the School. Brothers and boys benefited from a better quality of life under good ones, and conditions deteriorated under those who were incompetent.

Physical abuse

9.29 In their Opening Statement, the Christian Brothers addressed the question of physical punishment of the boys. Under the heading ‘Corporal Punishment’ they discussed in general terms its use in their schools, and under ‘Records of Abuse in St Joseph’s Tralee – Physical Abuse’ they detailed the cases of documented abuse in their records.

9.30 In the section under ‘Corporal Punishment’ they submitted that the system in use in the primary school in St Joseph’s, Tralee was the same as that used in all national schools at the time. They conceded that there were lapses when severe punishment was used, and they cited two examples from the Visitation Reports, one in the 1940s and one in the 1960s. Apart from these concessions, however, the Christian Brothers submitted that the corporal punishment administered was acceptable by the standards of the time. If it was not, they insisted, appropriate action was taken:

Assuredly, there were occasional lapses in the administration of punishment, and the records show that when a serious breach of standards occurred, the matter was reported at the annual visitation when the Congregation authority visited the institution and reported on its functioning. On some occasions, the records show that the Resident Manager of the day secured the transfer of a brother from the staff of the institution because he, the Resident Manager, was dissatisfied with the manner in which the particular Brother in question disciplined the pupils.

9.31 Under the heading ‘Records of Abuse’, the Congregation identified two former members of staff as documented and acknowledged physical abusers of boys whilst they were in Tralee. Two other Brothers were ‘instructed to temper their teaching as there had been some reports of severity about them’. This instruction was given to the Brothers by letter at the same time as the

⁴ Prior to leaving, the Visitor gave the Resident Manager directions as to certain matters that should be attended to without delay including cleaning the entrance path and flowerbeds, employing a woman to take over the care of the laundry, teaching the boys table manners and providing them with washing facilities before dinner and tea time. These were reiterated in a follow-up letter to the Resident Manager, without the reference to the paths and flowerbeds.

Congregation accepted their application for Final Vows. They were later on the teaching staff of Tralee but there were 'no records to show that they did not comply with the advice given them'.

9.32 As a further example of how complaints were dealt with, they cited a case in the late 1960s when allegations were made that a boy had been severely punished. The Opening Statement further stated that the Department of Education had taken the case very seriously and, following an investigation, it had accepted the explanation given on behalf of the Resident Manager.

9.33 Although the Congregation reiterated its apology of 29th March 1998 in its Opening Statement, the only concessions it made with regard to physical abuse in Tralee were that occasional lapses in the administration of punishment did occur and that there were five documented cases of severe punishment in the records. In four out of the five documented cases, the Congregation suggested that the matters were dealt with appropriately. Only in the case of Br Marceau, dealt with below, did the Congregation concede that his withdrawal from the School 'was long overdue when it occurred' and 'the delay in taking firm action casts a shadow over the good work accomplished' by the Brothers in Tralee.

9.34 All 15 former residents who gave evidence in Phase II made allegations of physical abuse. Some former members of staff in their evidence admitted that the rules for corporal punishment were broken in Tralee, either by themselves or by others, and that excessive punishment of children did occur.

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Eriq

9.35 Br Eriq was in Tralee in the late 1930s. Three Visitation Reports referred to difficulties with this Brother. The first Report said that he was 'an open mouthed man and seems to be lacking in good sense'. It went on to say he was 'harsh with the boys', and that he 'punishes them in ways contrary to Rule and has the unhappy knack of setting them against him'. It found him 'the least suitable member of the staff' on account of, amongst other things, his poor handling of the boys and his severity and his clashes with the older boys.

9.36 Despite the very clear concerns expressed in the first Report about his severity, in a follow-up letter to the Resident Manager it was recommended that Br Eriq be appointed to a teaching post and that the services of a lay teacher could be dispensed with. The lay teacher had left before the next Visitation.

9.37 The next Visitor noted that 'instances of harsh treatment and severe punishment of boys' by Br Eriq had been brought to his attention and that he, along with Br Beaufort, had been warned of the 'possible evil consequences to the reputation of the school and to themselves personally of immoderate punishment of the boys'. Both expressed regret and promised to be 'more watchful over themselves in their necessary correction of the boys'.

9.38 The following Visitation Report again singled out Br Eriq for criticism of his excessive use of punishment:

[He] gives way rather often to outbursts of ill temper and inflicts immoderate corporal on the dull children in his class. I had abundant evidence that the charge against Br Eriq is true.

The Superior makes a strong appeal to have [him] changed at some future date and to get an additional Brother for the staff.

9.39 Br Eriq was subsequently moved in the early 1940s to another school. He served in Artane for a period of less than a year in the late 1940s. He left in April, not August, which was the usual time for Brothers to be moved.

9.40 During the course of the Phase I hearing, when asked whether he had any comment to make on the fact that this Brother was removed for immoderate corporal punishment and was then sent to another school, Br Seamus Nolan said:

Well, he went to another school with a warning to behave himself and to control that failure so there was a chance. He didn't lapse again apparently.

9.41 The Opening Statement stated that the request by the Resident Manager to have Br Eriq removed was a 'practiced way of dealing with irregularities but in cases where the fault was a major one the reason for the transfer was made clear to the perpetrator and was in effect a warning and punishment for severity in school'.

9.42 One complainant, appearing before the Investigation Committee, said of this man:

Yeah, he would hit you, he would hit you in a temper. He wasn't a cold, sadistic sort of man. He would hit you in a temper. He would lash out at you in a temper. But if you met him the next day he would talk to you quite okay like. What you done with Br Eriq is the best thing, try and keep out of his way in case he was in a bad mood ... He was just a hot tempered man from what I could see of him.

9.43 He added that Br Eriq was 'a bit of hard man...but he wasn't consistently hard. He could actually be quite reasonable'.

9.44 In their Statement to the Committee responding to the allegations of this complainant, the Christian Brothers said that they were in no position to respond to the allegations by the complainant, but the Brother was 'known to be over severe in class and was transferred at the end of the school year at the Superior's request'.

9.45 • **Three Visitation Reports revealed that Br Eriq had failed to heed warnings about excessive punishments. There was no reason to believe that moving him to another school would have had any effect on his violent outbursts. A Brother with a known propensity for violent behaviour should not have been sent to another industrial school where he could inflict such punishment on other children.**

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Marceau

9.46 Br Marceau was acknowledged by the Christian Brothers as having been 'in serious difficulty' regarding excessive corporal punishment before being assigned to Tralee in the early 1960s. He had had a long history of inflicting excessive corporal punishment and had even received a Canonical Warning because of it before arriving in Tralee. Although he was not a trained teacher, he taught in several schools, both day and industrial, between the late 1940s and the late 1960s. His extraordinary progress from one Christian Brothers' school to another, despite his severe problems, was an illuminating one, and can be accurately followed because of the rare amount of explicit detail and criticism found in the correspondence about him.

9.47 After Br Marceau was professed, his first posting was to a day school in Dublin, where he taught the infant class for seven years from the late 1940s.

9.48 One Visitation Report for that school noted that he was 'doing most efficient work' and without 'any apparent severity'. When he left this school, the annals noted that he had given 'wonderful service to the College having been in charge of the Infant dept. during his period here'.

9.49 He was then transferred to a school in the Midlands. A Visitation Report for that school in the late 1950s gave the first indication of a potential problem about his over-severe use of punishment:

Br Marceau is a most energetic teacher and his pupils have made unusually good progress, nevertheless, the parents do not seem to have sufficient confidence in him. He was a little too severe, but he has overcome that difficulty and realises the ill-effects severity could have in a school of that kind.

9.50 The next Visitor, 10 months later, found further fault with him. He wrote:

The Superior considers him as lacking in common-sense and to be unpredictable. He has been slack in carrying out directions given by the Superior. In this he does not seem to act through malice but through lack of understanding ... It is difficult to persuade Br Marceau that he is at fault in any way. He has, however, promised to do his best to comply in every way with the Superior's wishes.

9.51 A letter written in the early 1960s to the Superior followed up these criticisms by offering advice on how to deal with him:

In the case of Br Marceau we consider that encouragement from time to time will help him. He feels isolated in the sense that he is not a qualified teacher. He does useful work but it seems he has not much common-sense. While encouraging him and being kind to him, which you are, it will be always necessary to be watchful lest he act foolishly. Insist on his carrying out your directions and curb his tendency to excessive interest in matters outside the scope of his own duties.

9.52 These criticisms were vague, but the unease about his behaviour, his lack of common sense, his lack of understanding and his inability to accept that he was at fault, was a persistent theme.

9.53 This advice, however, had been overtaken by events, as the Superior had written to the Provincial about Br Marceau the previous month and, in this letter, more specific complaints were made. The letter referred to two complaints by parents about excessive corporal punishment of their children, and went on to express the belief that the Brother would not change, and therefore should not be in charge of boys at all. The details contained in the letter were so explicit and disturbing that it merits being quoted in full:

My v dear Br. Provincial

I regret to have to report to you a case of excessive corporal punishment by Br Marceau. The mother of one of his pupils, aged 8 years came to me to-day and showed me the back of the child's hand with lumps on it caused by a stick. She had already brought him to the Doctor for a certificate. The Doctor, she said, told her it was not the first case he had come across of excessive punishment administered by this Brother. The mother also told me she was awaiting the return of her husband from Dublin, before taking action, I presume - legal action.

Last year, I had the humiliating experience of seeing the father of another boy, whom Br Marceau marked, take down his son's pants in our parlour and show me the weals on the buttocks and legs. I did not report to you at that time as the father said he would let the matter end there and through charity, I gave Br Marceau a severe lecture and he promised me it wouldn't happen again. On the present occasion, to-day, I have again spoken in no uncertain manner to the Brother. He told me he was sorry and that it wouldn't happen again! I fear this Brother won't be taught a lesson until he finds himself in Court. I don't think he is fit to be in charge of boys at all, much less boys of five to nine years of age.

I shall be grateful if you will advise me on this matter.

9.54 The evidence against Br Marceau was mounting. Not just parents but the local doctor had also come across cases of severe beatings by him. The Provincial's response was immediate. In a letter dated the next day, he wrote:

My very dear Br. Superior,

I very much regret the trouble that you are having over Br Marceau. There is little excuse for treating children as he has done. I sincerely hope that the parents will not bring on a court case. You must prevent that at all costs. We shall have to deal with this case as it deserves. This is the third such case that we had to deal with in recent times, and any one of them could have done very considerable harm to the Congregation if publicised. Please send Br Marceau here on Friday evening and if in the meantime anything further transpires you can let us know.

9.55 The main concern expressed was not the severity of the punishment inflicted on the children but the considerable harm that publicity would do to the Congregation. A court case was an outcome to be avoided 'at all costs'.

9.56 The Superior arranged for Br Marceau to report to the Provincial, but also sent the Provincial a letter the following day to warn him that Br Marceau would try to minimise the whole thing. It pointed out that Br Marceau had deliberately cut his cane in half to make it appear it was a light cane, and again reiterated that the Brother ignored instructions and remained a danger to boys. Again, the detailed nature of the criticism warrants the letter being quoted extensively:

My very dear Br Provincial,

I thank you for your letter received to-day. I shall send Br Marceau on the train, leaving here at 3pm. He should be in Dublin at 6.30pm. I have not heard anything further from ... the mother of the boy in question. She told me that her husband ... was in Dublin and would not be back until Friday. Meanwhile the boy has been kept from School.

I should like to point out that Br Marceau will probably try to minimise the whole thing, with you. He has always adopted this attitude with me. "I only gave him a tip". I consequently insisted on his coming to the parlour on each occasion and seeing the results of the "tip". If I didn't, he would say I exaggerated the whole thing. I assure you, I saw the weals on the body of the Solicitor's son and now on the hand of [this boy] I demanded the stick from Br Marceau and when I received it, it had been cut in two. I got half a stick. I may be wrong in thinking he deliberately cut it to make it appear it was a light cane. Finally, Br Marceau has not much sense or judgment and is capable of doing the most foolish things. As I stated in my last letter, he is a danger to boys. He will tell you he is sorry as he told me, but it happens "again". Br Cheyne (ex novice master) told me of another case of a boy here in [name of town] who was severely punished by Br Marceau. He asked me not to say anything to Br Marceau about it but warned me to be careful in watching Br Marceau in this respect. I have forbidden Br Marceau on more than one occasion, to use a stick or leather. He ignores my directions completely.

9.57 The Provincial saw Br Marceau and informed the Superior of the precise outcome in his letter:

My very dear Br. Superior,

We had Br Marceau before the Council this morning, and we have given him a Canonical warning in writing which is a very serious thing for him but there was nothing else that would be of any use and that the position had become serious. We explored every avenue to see if we could transfer him somewhere else but we just did not find it possible as he has no qualification for the ordinary schools and we had upset the others so much. Waterpark was a possibility but on account of the precarious position there in finance and in numbers we could not risk putting him in charge of the young children there just now. I expect however that he will do well with you now as he has been made to fully realise the seriousness of his position. I hope that the matter will end without court proceedings. If you can, get the child back to school.

9.58 Despite warnings that the Brother would not change or heed advice, the Provincial was willing to put the young children of the School at risk again by keeping the Brother there.

9.59 The Christian Brothers no longer have a copy of the Canonical Warning issued to this Brother, but its ineffectiveness soon became apparent. Less than nine months after the Canonical Warning, the Superior had to report further transgression. He wrote to the Brother Consultor:

My v dear Brother Consultor,

Br Marceau is again in trouble. Last night, a [parent] called on me. He charged Br Marceau with pulling hair out of his son's head. I brought Br Marceau to see the son and hear the charge. Br Marceau denied it and [the parent] called him a "liar", and said he believes his son, who on being questioned would not admit the Brother did it until he was assured there would be no fear of consequences on telling the truth! [The parent] said on leaving, he would take his own action next time it happened – he would not go to the Superior or [text illegible] into Br Marceau's room and deal with him, not with "Kid gloves" either.

I intended investigating this matter to-day (Sat), but had not time, as Monsignor O'Byrne called in. I am inclined to believe [the parent]. I may be wrong, of course. Anyway Br Marceau told me to-day the two ... boys in his class should be put out until such time as their father apologises! I had reason a month or so ago to talk to Br Marceau on another matter and he accused me rather passionately of exaggerating things last year to you and the Br Provincial. In all, he is the "innocent" one, and we are all against him. He believes this and though he has zeal and works hard, he has no common sense.

I mentioned some time ago when writing you, that I have still to face angry parents and submit to insults. I am not going to interview another parent who comes to complain about Br Marceau. I am sick and tired of it all. Please do not write to him on the matter. He will deny everything. And I shall appear a "greater" enemy in his eyes.

9.60 There is a note of despair in the letter. The Superior's many pleas for action to be taken had come to nothing and now Br Marceau was shifting the blame onto him. His apparent helplessness is puzzling: faced with continued violence against his pupils, he seemed to have no power to do anything but complain. It seemed he did not even have the power to suspend Br Marceau.

9.61 He had also seen a young boy too frightened to blame Br Marceau for fear of punishment for telling the truth, yet his major concern was not for the boy. His letter was above all about his own dilemma of how to cope with Br Marceau and other potentially irate parents.

9.62 The Brother Consultor's reply was also despondent and gave no expectation of prompt action. He wrote:

My very dear Brother Superior,

We are indeed sorry to learn that Br Marceau has occasioned more trouble for you. At your request, I shall not write to Br Marceau about the matter for the present. You are requested, however, to try to get, if possible, the correct version of the incident that caused the complaint. The matter can then be raised at Visitation time or before then if necessary.

9.63 Unable to deal with Br Marceau, the Superior's one hope was to get the Visitor to take action. By return of post, he protested that he had already got the truth of the matter, and he gave further details. He went on to implore the Brother Consultor to remove Br Marceau from the School:

My v. dear Brother Consultor,

I thank you for your letter received to-day. I was indeed sorry to have to write you again about Br Marceau, but I could not help it. He will never learn his lesson. I interviewed this young boy ... aged nine, today. He states Br Marceau pulled hair out of his head, for doing the wrong sums. I asked him about other boys probably seeing it and he said that they

may have. I don't want to question other boys in Br Marceau's class. I asked this young boy too if he was asked since Friday – the day it happened, about the matter. He told me Br Marceau said that he [the boy] was telling lies and he admitted it, but it was true that Br Marceau pulled his hair out, as he did in June, when his mother complained. Why should this boy make up the story or why should his father come here in such a violent temper? Br Marceau still maintains he did not pull his hair out, and wants me to take some action against the father of the boy for his "threats"! Incidentally, I warned Br Marceau not to talk to the boy about the incident and yet I have it from the boy as also from Br Marceau that he questioned him again yesterday. After this incident of punishing last year, the then Br. Provincial wrote me that he contemplated sending Br Marceau to Waterpark but there were difficulties. In view of the past history; I expected Br Marceau would be transferred in Summer. I wrote you on this matter since Summer. Believe me, there is nothing personal in this. I am writing in the interests of the School, as well as in Br Marceau's interest. He would not make a good impression if there was a Court Case. I have forbidden Br Marceau to use a leather and it possible he is using his hands now. I heard him at times shouting at these unfortunate children. He has done a lot of harm to the School by his severity. He really is not responsible; for, his IQ is that of a young child.

In conclusion; this is the fourth complaint and I hope the last here; but I doubt it. If there is another, I am not meeting the people concerned. They may go where they like with the complaint. I suggest transferring Br Marceau at Christmas; it may be easier then. If you have no Brother, I could try and get a lady teacher. Please do not take me as dictating to you, but I see no Solution except a transfer. You could ask Br Reymond or any Brother here about Br Marceau. Br Reymond also agrees with me that this Brother is not responsible. He is a bit mental. As I stated already, your writing Br Marceau will not help. He is denying everything; so it is his word against a boy's. As regards the mark in the head of [the boy]. I examined it and it is about the size of a sixpenny piece. It is not noticeable with the rest of the hair pulled over it.

9.64 The letter was unrelenting in its criticism of Br Marceau. The Superior made it clear that the violence would continue, and that he had seen the physical evidence of the violence – the bald patch on the boy's head where the hair had been pulled out. The facts were overwhelming. He implored that the Brother be speedily transferred. The Brother Consultor's reply offered no quick solution:

My very dear Br Superior,

Thanks for your letter re. Br Marceau, received this morning. The whole matter will have to come before this Council in due time. There are only two here at present, Br Tavin and myself. Br Marceau did get a canonical warning early in the year and apparently there has been a recurrence of the fault.

I suggest that for the present you should point out to Br Marceau the seriousness of his position at present. That may be a restraint on him.

You mentioned his being removed at Christmas. You ought to investigate the possibility of getting a lady-teacher for the junior classes. Would Miss O'Neill⁵ be able for that work? When you learn of a satisfactory solution to the difficulty – without, however, making any definite arrangement – please communicate with us and there may then be the possibility of changing Br Marceau.

... I am hoping that you will be able to get a suitable person to look after the young children. That seems to be the best solution to the trouble.

9.65 The Brother Consultor could not remove a physically abusive teacher without having replacement staff. This fact suggested the harm and injury being inflicted on young children was secondary to

⁵ This is a pseudonym.

the staffing problem. The dilemma of where to put Br Marceau, to avoid the wrath of parents and the threat of litigation, was solved when he was moved to an industrial school. Br Marceau was transferred to Tralee less than two months after the Brother Consultor wrote the above letter. There was no evidence to suggest that the Superior there was warned about him before he arrived.

Br Marceau in Tralee

9.66 Within weeks, it became apparent that the move to Tralee made no difference to the behaviour of Br Marceau. The Visitation Report soon after his arrival stated that Br Marceau did not seem to be 'quite normal and would appear to be deteriorating mentally'. He was evidently 'lacking in good sense'. This precisely echoed the criticism made several times by his previous school.

9.67 The follow-up letter to the Resident Manager noted that this Brother 'may perhaps be inclined to be rather too exacting' and, accordingly, the Resident Manager would have to ensure that his 'zeal' for the children's progress did not get the better of him. The diplomatic choice of words reiterated the criticism that the Brother was too strict and would have to be watched to prevent him doling out excessive punishment to boys for not learning quickly enough.

9.68 Seven months later, Br Marceau was transferred to Glin, where he remained for over a year and a half, when he was transferred back to Tralee. The reason for the transfer, according to the Christian Brothers, was a staffing problem. They then suggested that it may have been to assist an elderly Brother, who also arrived in Glin at the same time. There remains uncertainty about the matter.

Br Marceau in Glin

9.69 A full account of Br Marceau's behaviour at Glin is covered in the chapter on that institution. Briefly, he was involved in an incident where a boy called him a 'Madman' and, by his own account, he ended up hitting the boy 'a few slaps on the hands'. That evening a swelling was noticed on the boy's jaw, and he accused Br Marceau of hitting him on the jaw with his fist. An X-ray revealed the right mandible was cracked. Br Marceau was moved, within a matter of days, back to Tralee. He did not receive another Canonical Warning. The letter notifying him of his impending move warned him about his behaviour. It stated that he was wrong to repeatedly question a boy to force him to reveal the names of other boys who used the nickname 'Madman'. His disregard for the Superior's authority was 'most reprehensible'. And he had made 'a mockery of the Superior's position of authority in regard to the boys'. The letter continued:

I hope you will do good work in training the poor boys of Tralee and in making their lives happy. Certainly your supervision must be keen but let it not be too obvious or prying. Pray for patience to put up with annoyance without losing your temper --- a Christian Brother who has not trained himself to do that is a failure. And respect the Superior's authority.

9.70 It appears that an inquiry was then carried out by the Department of Education into this incident, as there was a letter sent by Br Marceau denying that he struck the boy in the face and saying that he had nothing to add to the recent conversation (presumably with a Department official) in Tralee.

9.71 Br Seamus Nolan confirmed at the Phase I hearing that an inspector had been sent by the Department of Education to investigate this matter. He also said:

The upshot I think for peace sake he was removed and I think the Department eased off, they didn't really press the matter once they felt that he was no longer in that particular school.

Br Marceau's return to Tralee

9.72 Br Marceau arrived back in Tralee almost 18 months after having left. There was no indication on any of the material discovered to the Committee that the Resident Manager in Tralee was told why Br Marceau was being transferred there. One Visitation Report noted that Br Marceau was 'doing well at present and the answering of his class in Irish was good'. He was teaching fourth standard at the time.

9.73 A later Visitation Report, however, expressed concern about him. It mentioned he was not on the 'official staff':

[Br Marceau] is a problem and a constant source of worry and anxiety to the Superior. He has a persecution complex, among others, and is unpredictable. At the moment his chief preoccupation is trying to recover a set of tools which he believes the Superior has taken and his enquiries have extended to the men in the Shops. He has several tea chests and cases of nondescript "property" stored away under lock and key and is constantly adding to his store. The Superior has a big job in keeping him under surveillance ...

Br Marceau has a class of eleven boys but his stock of visual aids would supply several classes. I counted seventeen blackboards in his classroom. Most of his charts deal with Irish – lists of verbs, nouns, etc. – and he maintains that much time is saved. The children are tense and answer mechanically and are "encouraged" to use the time before class and other recess periods for learning off these lists and other lessons. He has beaten one of these boys severely, with the usual "black eye" result and boxed the ears of the youngest boy in the place, who attends the Convent School, but, as always, he denies everything when challenged and convinces himself that he is telling the truth. He made a strong appeal to the Visitor to have the Canonical Warning he received for such an offence annulled and he has consulted priests about this. It is preying on his mind.

9.74 This Visitation Report contained all the criticisms that the Superior of the school in the Midlands had made some years before: Br Marceau was using excessive corporal punishment, he was causing actual bodily harm to the boys, and could not be disciplined as he could see no wrong in himself. In the follow-up letter to the Resident Manager, he was advised:

It appears that it is still necessary to keep Br Marceau under surveillance and that his indiscretions are liable to give rise to embarrassing situations ... he must be absolutely forbidden to punish the children.

9.75 The next year, the Visitor observed that Br Marceau, 'who has a small class (10), seems to have steered clear of trouble (corporal punishment) during the year. He is very painstaking in the preparation of his work but lacks prudence'. He was teaching second and third standards, and one class in fourth standard.

9.76 Subsequently, however, the problem recurred. The next Visitor found him 'most devoted' but he still criticised his behaviour and his potential for being a 'danger'. He wrote:

[He] had a few breaks re punishment, not TOO serious, but he is always a potential danger, and difficult to convince. I have warned of this danger and told him that there is to be no punishment except in the approved method and that as little as possible. He is inclined to lose control of himself and then anything could happen.

9.77 Br Seamus Nolan, at the Phase I hearing, commented on this situation:

It was perfectly obvious that there was to be no more of this. He would have told the local person, the Provincial Superior, that [Br Marceau] would have to be removed from teaching. In the meantime I think the Provincial Superior already had that power and it wasn't exercised unfortunately.

- 9.78** Contrary to Br Nolan's interpretation of Br Marceau's removal, there is no evidence that Br Marceau was prevented from finishing the academic year as a teacher. At the end of the school year, the internal national school closed down anyway. He was not removed from the Institution and still had access to the children for over a year after the Visitation Report mentioned above.
- 9.79** A later Visitor wrote that Br Marceau was 'completely useless as an efficient staff member. He is not teaching and while the boys are at school he is free all day. He cannot be given any responsibility even in the evening time with the boys'.
- 9.80** Br Marceau was transferred from Tralee to St Helen's, Booterstown in the late 1960s. According to the Christian Brothers, he did not teach again.
- 9.81** The inadequacy of the Resident Manager appointed to Tralee in the 1960s was discussed above. He was considered by the Visitors to be lazy, disengaged and mentally slow. Such a man was clearly unable to protect the children in his care from the unpredictable violence of a man like Br Marceau.

Attitude of the Christian Brothers to Br Marceau's excesses and the action taken

- 9.82** This Brother continued to teach and inflict extreme punishment on boys for 10 years. His behaviour was severe and excessive and was known at the time to the Leadership of the Congregation.
- 9.83** The Opening Statement said that the Brother's 'withdrawal from a teaching and supervisory capacity in the school was long overdue when it occurred'. At the Phase I hearing, Br Seamus Nolan acknowledged that this Brother should not have been sent to Tralee after what happened in Glin. He could not explain it. He accepted that Br Marceau should have been removed before leaving the school in the Midlands. At the Phase III hearing, he also acknowledged that it was '*absolutely indefensible and extremely difficult to understand, impossible to understand how it [was] allowed to go on for so long*'. He claimed the Brother was there '*essentially as a supernumerary to help out, not in an official capacity, and maybe the idea was that perhaps some supervision would be enough for him. But he had also failed on that in other occasions*'.
- 9.84** In short, no explanation could be proffered by the Christian Brothers as to why this individual was permitted to continue to have control over children in several different schools.
- 9.85** Br Nolan also stated during the Phase I hearing that he believed that Brothers in Tralee would have complained about Br Marceau, but that there were no written reports apart from the Visitation Reports.
- 9.86** Br Nolan confirmed that transferring a Brother was a mark of disapproval, but he was still unable to explain the leniency shown towards Br Marceau.
- 9.87** In their Final Submissions to the Committee, the Christian Brothers accepted that:
- there had been a failing in how the Congregation dealt with this Brother;
 - his removal from teaching should have taken place earlier; and
 - the response of the Congregation to the problem had been 'inadequate', possibly partially due to the view of Brothers that it was not appropriate for them to interfere with the work of another Brother.

Evidence of Other Members of Staff

- 9.88** Four former members of staff at Tralee were asked about Br Marceau in evidence. The first Brother, Br Bevis, had no comment to make on him. He did not recollect ever seeing him punish a boy.

9.89 The second Brother, Br Aribert, noted that Br Marceau had problems with the boys. He and the other Brothers did not agree with Br Marceau's methods of teaching and punishment. He said he could be a bit severe at times. He also said that he should have been able to complain to someone about this Brother, but could not. He accepted that Br Bevis would have had the authority to discipline Brothers, but that did not seem to happen.

9.90 The third Brother, Br Mahieu, said that Br Marceau would never have been asked to supervise a dormitory, as he would have caused trouble. In his view, he should never have been a teacher or put into a teaching situation, '*He just hadn't got a clue about controlling kids*'. He described Br Marceau as a religious fanatic who also had difficulty in controlling himself.⁶ He accepted that Br Marceau was violent but he did not, however, remember any specific incidents other than shouting. He said he seemed a little strange.

9.91 A fourth Brother, Br Lisle, said Br Marceau was '*very, very strict*' and a '*little bit eccentric*'. He had no time for the pupils at all. He could not, however, say what went on in the classroom because he was not there. He said Br Marceau thought everyone was against him. He did not remember a boy with a black eye, but did name the youngest boy in the school, who was four or five at the time, whose ears were boxed by Br Marceau. He said he never challenged Br Marceau about what he did because he, Br Lisle, had nothing to do with the school. That was the job of the Principal.

What Br Marceau himself said of his disciplinary methods

9.92 The Christian Brothers at one point sent questionnaires to various Brothers for response. These dealt with the running of the industrial schools. A questionnaire was sent to Br Marceau, and in it he said of his disciplinary methods:

You were expected to handle your own discipline problems. I was humane in my treatment but I also used the lamh laidir.⁷ I also used competition among the pupils, and rewards.

9.93 He went on to say that he thought that most of the allegations made against the Christian Brothers, including those made against him, were false.

Oral evidence given by complainants

9.94 Br Marceau was in Tralee for eight months in the early 1960s, and for six and a half years later that decade. The Investigation Committee heard a number of serious complaints of physical abuse against this individual. A number of these complainants also alleged sexual abuse against him, and these are outlined in the section dealing with sexual abuse in Tralee.

9.95 A former resident said he thought Br Marceau was '*the worst*' of all the Brothers. The boys knew when to avoid him. His moods could change at any time and he would turn on them both in and out of the classroom. He recounted an incident when the boys were playing under an alleyway and Br Marceau swung a hurley at them. The boy in front of him ducked and the hurley hit the complainant on the back of the head. Bleeding from his nose, he was taken to the nurse to be cleaned up and then he went to bed. Not long after this incident, he was taken to an ophthalmic surgeon in Tralee, who put a patch on his good eye, telling him he had a lazy eye. He was prescribed glasses and put the patch over the good eye but a week later he had to remove the patch because he could not see with the '*eye going bad*'. The other boys were also laughing at him. The complainant stated that, years later, an eye specialist told him he had a detached retina, which he, the complainant, believed had occurred as a result of the blow by Br Marceau.

⁶ He said that he thought it was probably another Brother (Br Cheney, the Principal at that time) who made the decision that he was to be kept away from the dormitories but he 'would totally agree with that'.

⁷ 'Strong hand' in Irish.

- 9.96** He also told a story about a swimming trip where the water was freezing. Nobody wanted to get into the water but Br Marceau had a 'set' against one particular boy and tried to make him get in. All the boys started to throw small pebbles at the Brother and it caused a riot. The boys all ran back to Tralee, breaking windows and glass on the way.
- 9.97** Another witness recalled that a boy had received a package at Little Christmas (6th January) and the gift inside was a broken cap gun. The boy told Br Marceau it was broken, and he called him '*an ungrateful wretch*' and gave him a black eye and swollen face.
- 9.98** Another complainant recalled Br Marceau and one of the boys getting into a fight about the boy being late for church. That night the complainant saw Br Marceau coming to the dormitory with a hammer up his sleeve. The next day he saw the boy who had been involved in the fight with Br Marceau and his face was '*all swollen, one eye was closed and the other one was only half open*'. The complainant asked the boy what had occurred, and he told him that Br Marceau had hit him with a hammer.
- 9.99** This complainant also said that Br Marceau would give the boys in first and second class charts to learn at night and, if they did not know them in the morning, '*they were in for a hammering*'. He was in third class next door at the time and would '*hear all the lads screaming and shouting*'. The second time Br Marceau was in Tralee, two other Brothers (including the school Principal) would wander through to keep an eye on him and to see he was not giving the young boys a hard time.⁸ This level of supervision is consistent with the Visitation Reports and the oral evidence of other Christian Brothers.
- 9.100** This complainant also referred to Br Marceau's habit of urinating in the classroom, saying that he used to have a bucket in the class that he '*used as a loo*'.
- 9.101** Another witness, who made allegations of being beaten several times by Br Marceau, alleged that Br Marceau used to lock the classroom door during classes. He was very strict in class:
- One minute he was talking to you and the next minute he could turn around and hit you with something, whatever it was. The nearest thing to his hand, he would hit you with ... It could be anything. It could be a bunch of keys he had in his pocket. He would take out the biggest key, which was the key to the classroom door, and he would hit you in the head with that. Or he would take the duster which had a wooden back, he would throw it at you. He would bang your head off the wall. Sometimes he would give you the edge of the ruler down the back of your hand. He would lift the top of the desk, he would put your fingers in the desk and slam the desk down on top of your fingers ... If you dropped a pencil while he was doing something he would call you up to the front of the classroom and he would given you a beating for it because you disturbed him. He was just a violent tempered man.*
- 9.102** On one occasion in the band room, Br Marceau had one of the older boys on the ground and he was '*giving [him] the heel of his boot down on the back of the head*'. He said that this Brother was the type of person who would '*just turn. He got violent for no reason, he just had a very bad temper*'.

Discovery to the Committee of documentation regarding Br Marceau by the Christian Brothers

- 9.103** Given the seriousness of Br Marceau's history with the Congregation, it was a matter of considerable concern that significant correspondence was not discovered to the Investigation Committee until 12th January 2006, two days after the public hearing in respect of this Institution.

⁸ The two Brothers referred to were Br Mahieu and Br Cheney.

The solicitors for the Christian Brothers explained that this, and other material furnished at the same time, came to light as a result of further searches of archival material in the possession of the Congregation and 'new collections' being acquired by the archive since the main discovery had been made. The majority of the letters quoted above and in the Glin chapter regarding the 'cracked jaw' incident were not furnished to the Investigation Committee with the original discovered documents in relation to Tralee or Glin by the Christian Brothers. Although additional material was uncovered by the Congregation's archivist and forwarded to their solicitors in December 2005, the Christian Brothers said:

Unfortunately due to the ongoing hearing of the end of the Artane modules these were not looked at and their true significance noted by the writer until the 12/01/06. The delay furnishing these documents is very much regretted.

9.104 The importance of these documents, recording as they do a serious incident of physical abuse concerning a Brother in an institution that was about to be the subject matter of a public hearing, should have been apparent..

- 9.105**
- **Br Marceau was violent and dangerous and known to be a risk to children, but the Congregation did nothing to protect them.**
 - **This Brother's understanding was deficient, he was irresponsible, he was out of control, he did not respond to warnings or advice, he could not be disciplined, he was manifestly in denial about his behaviour and he was unqualified to teach. The Congregation moved this man from one institution to another in disregard of the interests of the children.**
 - **It was particularly irresponsible to move this Brother to an industrial school, where his unpredictable and uncontrollable violence was unlikely to lead to parental complaints or litigation.**
 - **The Congregation said in their Submission, 'His withdrawal from a teaching and supervisory capacity in the school was long overdue when it occurred', but they did not explain why the full range of sanctions open to them was not used. Despite a succession of physically abusive incidents that made it clear he was a danger to children, he was only once given a Canonical Warning, and that was before he began his periods of teaching in industrial schools.**
 - **The failures of the Congregation led to a great deal of unnecessary suffering and fear in vulnerable children in their care.**

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Jules

9.106 The letters referred to in the Opening Statement by the Congregation, in which two Brothers were instructed to 'temper their teaching' before taking their Final Vows, were amongst a number of letters written in the 1930s by the Superior General of the Congregation to newly professed Brothers who went on to serve in Tralee and other industrial schools throughout the period of this Investigation.

9.107 These letters were contained in the Rome Documents discovered to the Investigation Committee in 2004. Three of these letters had also been held in the Irish archives.⁹

9.108 The first of these letters was written in the mid-1930s. Br Jules was sent a letter congratulating him on being admitted to perpetual vows. The letter also stated:

You incline to the harsh side in school both in language and in inflicting bodily pain. Pupils hate sarcasm and they have a keen sense of what is just and fair in punishment. If you

⁹ The letters to Br Sebastien, Br Millard and Br Beaufort mentioned below.

would secure respect for yourself and for your teaching be kind and just towards your pupils. It is said you are a poor student yourself. Perhaps it is due to your failure to make preparation for your work as a teacher that your pupils are made to suffer doubly.

9.109 This letter was sent to Br Jules whilst he was in Artane. He had previously worked in Tralee for a number of years, where his behaviour had also come to the attention of the Provincial and a Visitor.¹⁰

9.110 While in Tralee, Br Jules wrote to the Provincial in response to an inquiry made relating to ‘a special physical training’ given to a boy whose ‘bodily structure’ was ‘abnormal’. The Brother explained that the Industrial School Inspector had advised him to give the boy in question special physical training. The boy failed to perform the exercise on this occasion, though formerly he had been capable of doing so. He went on to say in the letter to the Provincial:

Appealing to him several times I found that there was no improvement whatsoever. Not understanding what was wrong with the boy I gave him a few slaps whilst he was in this bent position (about four slaps).

After this punishment I again asked him to perform the exercise. He then started to cry and said it hurt him to bend as his back was sore.

On further inquiry he told me that he had been beaten on the back by the teacher, and that he got a kick from one of the boys whilst at play. He received this injury on the hip.

Had I known that this boy was suffering in this way I would have not asked him to perform this drill exercise much less punish him.

9.111 Less than a month later, the Visitor commented on Br Jules’s methods of discipline:

Br Jules has his boys in a state of terror. He maintains a harsh, unnatural discipline. His boys show this. At times he has been very severe and has treated individual boys in a cruel manner ... Were it not for the occasional outbreaks of severity on the part of Br Jules and his general harsh manner in dealing with them, the school would hold a high place amongst our Institutions.

9.112 This Brother had been due to take his perpetual vows that year but was rejected. The following year, it was noted that he had been ‘too exacting in school’. He showed ‘little devotedness to study’ and was ‘troublesome, crossgrained’. It was concluded that he ‘has not had good record – doubtful candidate’. He was, however, ultimately allowed to take his vows a year later.

9.113 Br Jules moved from Tralee to Artane, where he stayed for over 15 years. He later worked as Resident Manager in Glin in the 1950s. Br Jules is considered in the reports on Artane and Glin. His tenure in Glin as Resident Manager was marked by a less harsh disciplinary regime than had previously been in place.

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Sebastien

9.114 In a letter to Br Sebastien written in the late 1930s, confirming that he had been admitted to perpetual vows, there was a reference to ‘two rather serious faults’. One was his ‘severity to the boys’, which was described as ‘indefensible’ and ‘in every way against the canons of the teaching profession’. It went on to state that ‘Punishment in a moderate way is allowed; but severity is altogether to be avoided. It injures the boy’s feelings and never produces real improvement’.

9.115 This Brother worked in Artane in the 1930s and in Salthill in the early 1940s, followed by Tralee for two years. He did not teach in any industrial schools after leaving Tralee. He did, however, continue to teach in day schools until the late 1960s.

¹⁰ He had also worked in Carriglea in the early 1930s.

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Beaufort

- 9.116** A letter, written in the late 1930s, confirming to Br Beaufort his admission to perpetual vows, warned him about his temper:

A still more dangerous weakness in you was mentioned in the suffrages. You are passionate in your dealings with the boys. In fact at times you show so little control of your temper that you are in danger of inflicting serious bodily harm on the boys by your manner of correcting them. Watch yourself and pray to God to give you some of His meekness and forbearance. Never punish a boy in any way except what is permitted by Rule. Forgive easily the small failings of your pupils and in this way more good will be done than by harsh treatment.

- 9.117** This Brother was in Tralee from the mid to late 1930s, having previously worked in Carriglea in the early 1930s. One Visitation Report during that time made the following reference to him:

The main defect in Br Beaufort is his violent temper which on some occasions vented itself on the boys, but he is sorry afterwards and I am satisfied that he is on his guard against this defect and is striving to correct it.

- 9.118** The letter warning Br Beaufort about his temper was sent to him less than three months later. Notwithstanding that warning, his temper was again mentioned by the Visitor less than six months later. The Visitor referred to him as having at times 'an uncontrolled temper'. The Visitor also noted that both he and Br Eriq (mentioned above) had been warned of the 'possible evil consequences to the reputation of the school and to themselves personally'. Both had expressed regret about their behaviour.

- 9.119** Br Beaufort moved to Artane after leaving Tralee. He stayed there for 15 years, and the Committee heard complaints from ex-pupils of Artane about severe and abusive physical punishment by him.

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Millard

- 9.120** In the late 1930s, in a letter to Br Millard confirming admission to his sixth annual vows, there was reference to his being 'unduly severe' with his pupils:

You are most devoted in school, but unduly severe with your pupils. You give them too much home-work and this necessitates much punishment when it is not completely done next day. The slapping starts, so it is stated, very early in the morning and often the time for recreation due to the boys is curtailed. Now, we ought to practice moderation in all things and not allow the great virtue of zeal to degenerate into a fault by overdoing our duty. I appeal to your own good sense to remedy what is complained of. With God's help you can do it.

- 9.121** Br Millard worked in Glin in the 1960s and returned to Tralee for the last few years of its existence as an industrial school. During this time in Tralee, he responded to a complaint made by a TD in relation to punishment meted out by him to a boy.

- 9.122** In the late 1960s a boy, William,¹¹ absconded from Tralee, and was apprehended and severely punished by Br Millard. He informed his parents who complained to their local TD, who in turn wrote to the school and the Department of Education.

- 9.123** In his letter to the Resident Manager, this TD outlined how the father of a boy in Tralee had made 'rather startling allegations against your community which I am inclined to take with the greatest reserve and, indeed, disbelief'.

¹¹ This is a pseudonym.

9.124 He went on to say that the father claimed that a strap had been put around his son's neck and was 'pulled tightly so that his neck "was in an awful condition"'. The father claimed two other boys saw the condition of his son's neck and that one Brother put the boy's head between his (the Brother's) legs whilst another Brother held his hands behind his back and he was punished whilst in this position. The father also said the boy had a black eye when he came home from the School. A copy of this letter was also sent to the Secretary of the Department.

9.125 Br Millard had been appointed as Resident Manager as successor to Br Sinclair. He only lasted a number of weeks in that position, and was recorded as having resigned 'due to ill-health', days before the incident with the boy.

9.126 The appointment of his successor, Br Roy, as Superior dated from four days before William absconded. Br Millard had been Superior for a total of 18 days. Although the letter was addressed to the Resident Manager, who by then was Br Roy, it was Br Millard, the perpetrator of the alleged abuse, who dealt with the matter. He wrote:

Dear [TD],

Unfortunately Br Sinclair, to whom you addressed your letters has been absent from St Joseph's since the beginning of the month. As Brother-in-Charge when the incidents mentioned by you were supposed to have taken place, I take the liberty of replying in his stead.

It alleged by [William's father], that his son received excessive punishment, in fact what could be termed brutal punishment, from certain members of the Staff, when he was returned to the School after absconding on the morning of the 10th of this month. I categorically denigh this charge because it was I personally, who took him into custody from the Gardaí at mid-night on the same day on which he absconded. It was I also who administered the punishment which was meted out to him on that occasion, in the presence of another Brother who happened to be with me at the time.

It is true, I used a leather strap as the instrument of correction. I used it on his bottom because I maintain that that is where nature intended it should be used in such circumstances. There is no ... question of the strap having been put round his neck or anywhere near his neck for that matter. I might add here, that since the arrival of your letters, I have examined the boy's neck and can find not the slightest sign of any mark or bruise which would indicate that he suffered the treatment that he complained about. Neither have I any knowledge of the black eye he is supposed to have received.

One would imagine, that following such alleged treatment, the boy would be slow to take to the roads again. Still, on the 18th inst., he and a companion again made off and this time persuaded another lad to join them. Believe me, Sir, that is not the normal behaviour of a boy who had been excessively punished for previous misdemeanours ...

... Since his coming here he has absconded on five separate occasions ...

Since this last episode, they took to the roads once more. It was on this occasion that they succeeded in reaching Cork and painting the picture of excessive punishment and of brutal treatment in which we are ... supposed to have indulged.

Just half an hour before the arrival of your letter on yesterday morning, I received a 'phone call from Inspector ... of [town] seeking advice as to the advisability of having young William committed to Daingean on account of his persistent thieving and general misconduct. I advised against it because of his age and asked the Inspector to do everything in his power to keep the case out of the Court for the lad's sake. In view of the cruel allegations brought against us by his father, I am beginning to wonder if I acted wisely in asking the Inspector to be lenient with the offender. Maybe I should have allowed the law to take its course.

I fully appreciate your position in this matter and hope the above account will help to clarify a nasty situation.

- 9.127** The letter turned around the allegation that the Brother had excessively punished the boy, by arguing that he had in fact been too 'lenient with the offender'. It also justified Br Millard replying to the criticism by saying that he was 'the Brother-in-Charge' at the time of the incident. The Congregation records showed that this was not the case.
- 9.128** The TD sent the same letter of complaint to the Department of Education, and it was replied to with an undertaking to look into the matter.
- 9.129** Seven weeks later, the Department wrote to the TD as follows:
- Dear Deputy ...
- I refer again to your representations regarding William ... who is detained in St. Joseph's School, Tralee.
- The Matter has in the meantime been investigated by an inspector of my Department, who interviewed Br [Millard] who inflicted the punishment and Br ... who witnessed it and also young William himself.
- The inspector's investigation has established that the facts of the case are substantially as stated in Br Millard's reply ... to you and that account was confirmed by young William and his companion in absconding, who bear no resentment to the Brothers for their treatment.
- 9.130** No documents, such as interview notes relating to the investigation conducted by the Department Inspector, were discovered to the Committee. Notwithstanding the fact that the punishment meted out was clearly in contravention of the Department's own rules (in that it was not punishment on the hand but on the buttocks), there was no evidence of any action being taken against the school for breaking these rules and regulations.
- 9.131** Although the Department of Education addressed this incident in its Phase III Submission, it did not clarify the nature of the investigation that resulted in the exoneration of the Brother.
- 9.132** It was accepted by Br Seamus Nolan during the Phase III hearing that the punishment meted out to this boy was an impermissible punishment. He did, however, point out that it was partly within the rule, insofar as the punishment was administered in the presence of a witness.
- 9.133** The question was also raised at the hearing as to why the person entrusted with the investigation of the matter was the person against whom the accusation had been made. Br Seamus Nolan said that the matter may have been dealt with by him so as not to leave a 'nasty job' for his 'successor'. In fact, the 'successor' had been in office at the time of the incident. Br Nolan further said that this individual had been appointed Resident Manager and after a short while resigned, and it 'could well be on account of this, that he resigned from that appointment, though he remained on in the staff as assistant manager'.¹² Again, this explanation does not accord with the dates in the documentation.
- 9.134** There has been no documentation furnished to the Committee by the Christian Brothers that would shed light on whether there was any investigation within the Christian Brothers into the matter. Br Nolan acknowledged that it was a pity that the allegation did not go directly to the Provincial, to be dealt with as a 'completely outside matter'. He said that it was clear that the School at the time felt that it was satisfactory to deal with the matter in this way.

¹² The school annals note that the Brother resigned from the post due to ill-health.

9.135 The boy at the centre of this allegation was transferred to another industrial school early the following year.

- 9.136**
- **The correspondence was dealt with by Br Millard, who was the Sub-Superior and the person who had inflicted the punishment. The Department should have questioned the propriety of such a response because of conflict of interest.**
 - **The Department did not question the unapologetic response of the Brother about his flagrant breach of their regulations. He showed no concern about confessing to such a breach. Where rules for the protection of children in care could be flouted, it is not surprising that abuses occurred.**
 - **This incident illustrated the difficulty in making complaints about corporal punishment. When regulations were ignored, there was no objective standard by which harshness could be judged and so no behaviour could be criticised or condemned.**

Documented cases of physical abuse: Br Raynard

9.137 In the late 1940s, the Department's Inspector made the following comment:

Generally well run school ... I also stressed the necessity for just corporal punishment and told him of the complaint in the Remand House and the boy who had been whacked with a shovel in the turnip field.

9.138 It is not clear what this reference was and it did not appear to give rise to any follow-up letter from the Department. It was similar to an incident described by a complainant who also told of being hit with a spade across the back by a Brother in the mid-1940s. The farm Brother at the time was Br Raynard. This complainant explained that he was hit with the spade when he was working on the farm. He was untacking a horse and forgot to open one side. The horse got a bit flighty and did some damage to the cart. The farm Brother lost his temper and hit him with the spade. He said that he did not hold it against the Brother, however, because he should have been a bit more careful with the horse. This same complainant said that this farm Brother and the two other farm Brothers, Br Madelon and Br Sauville, could be quite severe but fair as well.

9.139 Br Raynard was granted a dispensation in the mid-1950s, although it was not clear why this was granted.

- 9.140**
- **The letters from the mid to late 1930s to the newly professed Brothers indicate a concern on the part of the Provincial at the time to ensure that excessive punishment would be avoided, but it was not a systematic approach and does not appear to have been continued by his successors.**
 - **Restraint could have been achieved by the application of the Rules and Regulations for Industrial Schools, including use of the punishment book. The Congregation's own Rules set down clear guidelines for the use of corporal punishment, and a proper adherence to these would also have controlled excesses.**
 - **The Brothers referred to in these letters were unsuitable for work in an industrial school where the duties and responsibilities of caring for the children were more onerous than in a day school.**

Punishment book

9.141 Contrary to the Department's regulations, no punishment book was maintained in Tralee. To explain this fact, Br Seamus Nolan told the Investigation Committee during the Phase I public hearing:

There was an understanding that a punishment book was for special punishments where the so called crime was very severe and it needed a special punishment, but for whatever the reason there wasn't a punishment book.

9.142 He acknowledged that it was a requirement but, he said, it was one that *'went into disuse I am sorry to say'*.

9.143 In the Phase III hearing, Br Nolan accepted that there was no record of a punishment book ever having existed in Tralee. He added that, if the Department had brought up the question of a punishment book, it would have *'got a result'*. He said, *'apparently the impetus just didn't arrive, to undo the situation that was there'*.

9.144 It was clear from the 1937 Visitation Report that no punishment book existed at that stage. The Visitor appended a list of points given to the Resident Manager that included the following:

Get a punishment book and enter therein punishment given ... If a boy misconducts himself he should be punished by the Sup. or the Br. in charge of the discipline and the punishment recorded in the punishment book.

9.145 This comment made it clear that the punishment book was not just a requirement of the Department. The Visitor felt the need of a record of what punishments were given, and for what reason. He wanted to check whether punishments met with the regulations governing them. Even though their Visitor had requested one, there was no documentary evidence of any attempt to comply with his recommendation. The Visitation Reports for subsequent years did not record whether a punishment book existed or not, suggesting the issue just died away.

9.146 There was no evidence that the Department asked to see the School's punishment book, or complained about the fact that one did not exist. Without it, the Department had no way of ensuring that the rules and regulations to restrict the use of corporal punishment were being complied with.

Complainant evidence regarding Br Ansel, Disciplinarian

9.147 A Visitation Report in the early 1940s referred to a complaint by the Resident Manager that the existing Disciplinarian, Br Piperel, was *'not sufficiently strict as disciplinarian'* and making a *'strong appeal'* to have him changed. He left in the early 1940s and, 12 months later, Br Ansel was sent from Artane to take over the role.

9.148 The Committee heard from two witnesses who gave detailed evidence about Br Ansel's harshness during his time as Disciplinarian.

9.149 The first witness, referring to Br Ansel, told the Investigation Committee:

He was absolutely terrible, that man. That man put the fear of God in me. Rather than meet that man I would hide. If I saw that man or I thought that man was going to come into the schoolyard I would disappear. That man was unbelievable ... He absolutely frightened me. Whenever you would meet him it was always a beating. It was always a clip across the side of the head with the baton. He just seemed to – as you look back on it in later years he didn't like me for some reason or another, I don't know what.

9.150 The *'baton'* was different to the leather. He explained that it was *'made of several pieces of leather stitched together as they would stitch leather in a shoe'*. It was shorter and stiffer than the leather. He said that they used to say that there was a lump of lead in the end of it, but he had no direct knowledge of that.

- 9.151** He also recalled being beaten on his feet by Br Ansel with this 'baton', after Br Ansel asked him to put his feet out from under the sheets. This happened to him one night when a boil on his bottom burst and his sheets were covered in blood. He was not given any explanation for the punishment and, although he had difficulty walking afterwards, no Brother asked him what was wrong with him. He never discussed it with anyone.
- 9.152** This same witness recalled one night when between 15 and 20 boys were called into the kitchen and locked in, along with three Brothers, one of whom was Br Ansel.¹³ They were ordered one by one to take off their nightshirts, and to tie the shirts around their waists, fold their arms and bend forward. Br Rayce said how many strokes each boy was to have. The witness was ordered to have six strokes of the cat-o'-nine-tails. He was never told why.
- 9.153** The implement he called the 'cat-o'-nine-tails' was made in the School. When he was marching around the school yard, he had seen the Disciplinarian at the end of the yard threading leather thongs through holes in a piece of wood shaped as a handle. This was the implement that was used on them. After the beating, he was 'covered in blood' and some of the strokes went around his neck. It was the only time this implement was used. He did not recall other boys being punished with it, and he did not recall the matter being discussed afterwards. He added that he thought Br Ansel enjoyed the beatings.
- 9.154** The second witness said that, until Br Ansel arrived from Artane in the early 1940s, 'I would say the place was reasonable'. He said that, when Br Ansel introduced himself to the boys as the new Disciplinarian, he told them, 'you will learn what a disciplinarian is by the time I finish with you'. From that time he imposed a really ruthless rule. The witness went on to explain:

Then he proceeded from there, he became an absolute tyrant. I knew real fear. He went on from there inventing punishments, like the holding out the hand wasn't enough. The sole of the foot was one at night. Your name would be called and you just automatically stuck your leg out and you got three lashes of a leather ... You would get three lashes for every item or whatever; if you were talking in the dormitory, whatever it might be. Then he went on from there, he created monitors, twelve monitors but we didn't know what they were. Whatever you do, step out of bounds, they were certain areas you weren't allowed to go. Talking to another boy in the toilet, that was an offence, things like that, your name would be put down. He created a pay night, Friday night ... It was punishment but he called it pay nights. In Ireland in them days payday was mostly in all jobs I believe on a Friday. So, he called this Friday night rather than punishment night "pay night". We all lined up in the hall and he would come up the stairs, I don't know what it was about me but I always got the job of speaking. My job was to stand up, he had his table out and a book and an ash plant put on the table, and the gymnasium horse, the vaulting horse in the front. He would stand up and come up the stairs and he'd said good evening. I used to speak first and say "Good evening, sir", the rest of the school would reply "Good evening, sir". Then he'd say "What night is it [Name of witness]?" I would say "it is Friday night, sir." "What does that mean, [name of witness]?" "That means it's pay night, sir and we are glad it's come." Then I would sit down. Then he would proceed to look at the book and call out the names ... of whatever you'd be accused of, what was down on the book. The monitors wrote whatever offence you committed during the week or, offences, it might be two or three. Your name would be called out and you marched up, dropped your trousers, jumped over the horse and you got three lashes of an ash plant on the bare backside for every item. The problem was that if you got it all at once your name might not appear again until way down the list then you would get it on other side, and you wouldn't be able to sit down for a few days.

¹³ One of the others was Br Rayce. The complainant did not know who the third one was.

We had a sort of unwritten code there, that you took it ... no matter what punishment you got you took it like a man, you didn't squeal so you just took it. You went away in a quiet corner and cried later when you got away from the crowd or something. You might have wished your father and mother were there, or something like that.

- 9.155** This complainant also explained that there was a *'monitor's book'* that the monitors used to write in. Br Ansel did not tell the boys who the monitors were and the boys did not know. This meant that on Friday night you did not know whether your name was in the book or not. He did not know how the monitors were chosen or changed. He thought it would be out of fear of receiving a beating. *'Pay night'* lasted as long as Br Ansel remained in Tralee.
- 9.156** Br Ansel used other forms of punishment. These included *'square bashing on the double, thumbs up'* and running around the field. Running produced greater discomfort because the boys had chafing tweed clothes, no underwear and boots that *'wouldn't be very clever fitting'*. He explained, *'They'd just keep you running until you dropped, which I found was probably the hardest punishment of all really on a hot day'*.
- 9.157** He said that Br Ansel was trying to make young soldiers out of the boys and, on one occasion, had them lined up as a *'human rake'*, raking the hay on Tralee racecourse because the Christian Brothers had bought the hay on that site. Their bottoms had to be in line, military style, and Br Ansel would whip the bottom of any boy not in line. He recalled, *'You daren't take thistles out of your fingers or anything like that. You just kept raking'*.
- 9.158** He also described a Saturday morning art class and how Br Ansel had a cane that could be bent. He explained that, while the boys were drawing, he would swish the cane by their ears while asking them questions that they had to get correct to avoid being hit on the ears. Br Ansel, he said, *'had no problem where he'd hit you or when he'd hit you'*.
- 9.159** A translation of a Department of Education memorandum to the Secretary, Office of National Education, stated that Br Ansel *'controls with authority but without being harsh. He succeeds in exercising a kind discipline in the school'*.
- 9.160** The Visitor in the same year noted that he was *'a very satisfactory man'* and, if the Resident Manager placed more confidence in him, the *'Community would be happier and the boys better disciplined'*. Another Visitation Report noted he was a *'very efficient' Disciplinary*.
- 9.161** According to the second complainant, Br Ansel got booed on his last day in Tralee. Everybody was happy that he was leaving.
- 9.162** Br Octave, who responded to an internal Christian Brothers questionnaire relating to various issues regarding the management of Tralee, said that Br Ansel:
was the best Principal and disciplinarian. He didn't tolerate disobedience in word or act. Returned runaways had to "walk the line" for longish periods until they were broken.
- 9.163** Br Ansel left Tralee in 1945 and went to Carriglea at a time when it was known to the Congregation authorities that there were considerable disciplinary problems there, and his time there is discussed in the chapter on Carriglea. Br Ansel received a Canonical Warning in the mid-1950s because of an involvement with a woman, and he was granted a dispensation some 10 years later.
- 9.164** • **Br Octave described this colleague as being intolerant of any kind of disobedience 'in word or act' it is significant that this attitude is perceived, even today, by a member of the Congregation as being the mark of a good Principal and Disciplinarian.**

Complainant evidence regarding Br Maslin

- 9.165** The Investigation Committee heard complaints about Br Maslin, who served in Tralee at the same time as Br Ansel. A witness said that Br Maslin *'just enjoyed beating me and beating a lot of the boys'*. He was only beaten by him for *'lessons in school'*. The beatings were *'severe ... regularly the cane, regularly the strap'* and he was *'walloped across the backside'*.
- 9.166** On one occasion when Br Maslin asked him a question he could not answer, Br Maslin *'kept on hitting me here in the middle of the forehead. Eventually I had a big bump here'*.
- 9.167** On another occasion, Br Maslin made the boys stand around the class and instructed them to hit the boy in front of them *'across the face with the open hand'*. When he hesitated in doing this, Br Maslin said, *'This is the way that you do it'*, and hit him, the witness, knocking him to the floor. When he got up again, he had to hit the other boy. However, *'the beatings with the canes of course and the strap went on a lot longer than that'*. He said that the strap was made at the cobblers, of several layers of leather about an inch thick and was more like a baton than a strap.
- 9.168** Br Maslin was moved from Tralee to Letterfrack in the early 1940s. It is not clear why he left Tralee in January and not August, the usual time for Brothers to move schools. He became the Disciplinarian in Letterfrack and, in the mid-1940s, one of his colleagues in Letterfrack wrote to the Visitor that Br Maslin, the Disciplinarian, *'can inflict terrible punishment on children and the boys seem to have a awful dread of his anger'*. The incident which gave rise to this complaint is discussed in detail in the chapter on Letterfrack. He was then moved from Letterfrack to Carriglea in January 1946, at a time when it was known to the Congregation authorities that there were considerable disciplinary problems in Carriglea.

Complainant evidence regarding Br Dumont

- 9.169** This senior Brother was the subject of two complaints to the Investigation Committee.
- 9.170** The first witness said that he was punished by this Brother *'but his was more the cane once or twice but nothing really to bother me'*. The Brother would, however, give instructions for them to go and run around the field until he told them to stop, then he would forget, and the boys would run around the field until it got dark.
- 9.171** The other complainant said he was *'a very dangerous man to get involved with ... very quick to punish'*.

Complainant evidence regarding Br Sevrin

- 9.172** One witness gave evidence against Br Sevrin who served for a short time in Tralee. He recounted an incident in which he had not heard instructions forbidding boys to approach a statue. He did so and Br Sevrin refused to accept his apologies or the excuse that he had not heard the instruction. He told him to get across a chair. When he refused, Br Sevrin ordered six of the other boys to get him across the chair. The witness then got into a corner and was ready to fight the boys if they approached him. When the other boys backed off, the Brother tried to put him across the chair himself and beat him all the time with the strap. A struggle ensued and he said, *'I fell on the floor and he was astride me on the floor, he was over me and he was trying to belt hell out of me with this thing'*. The Brother then suddenly *'seemed to come over funny and he got very pale'* and backed away. Later that evening, he woke the complainant and gave him a bag of sweets.

Complainant and respondent evidence regarding Br Lafayette

- 9.173** Br Lafayette was in charge of the refectory for a period of nine years during the 1950s and 1960s. One Visitation Report referred to him as being *'somewhat independent and headstrong*

and somewhat difficult to manage at times'.¹⁴ Another Visitation Report criticised his inclination to interfere in charges other than his own, particularly on the farm.

- 9.174** The Investigation Committee heard from a number of former members of staff and ex-residents who remembered him in Tralee.
- 9.175** Br Aribert felt that Br Lafayette was *'strict ... harsh maybe on occasions'* and *'ran a very tight ship'*. He recalled a day when he was given the task of supervising the boys during a meal. He was *'nearly terrified going out there'*, but a boy whom he described as Br Lafayette's *'right-hand man'* made him *'completely redundant'* and ran the whole show. He could not say, however, whether this was due to Br Lafayette's good organisational skills or an element of fear. However, he did recall one particular act of kindness, when Br Lafayette procured apples and biscuits for the boys.
- 9.176** A second Brother, Br Chapin, said he was a *'stickler for a job'* and could have given *'a few clatters if he found that the job wasn't done'*. Br Chapin recalled the boys talking about Br Lafayette occasionally. He said he did not hear the other Brothers speak about him, but put that down to the fact that Br Lafayette worked in the refectory where the other Brothers would rarely go. This Brother stated that he knew that, if Br Lafayette gave a job to the boys to do, they did it or else they paid for it.
- 9.177** Br Bevis, when asked whether Br Lafayette was excessively severe towards the boys, said that he did not know, as he was not there when he punished the boys. One boy did, however, tell him he was *'punished severely'* by Br Lafayette.
- 9.178** A number of former residents gave evidence about Br Lafayette.
- 9.179** One complainant stated that he *'would have been great in the Nazis. He was the coldest, coldhearted person I ever came across ... He was cruel beyond belief'*.
- 9.180** By way of an example, he explained that he had a job of bringing dinner to sick boys. One boy had refused his food and it was returned uneaten to Br Lafayette in the kitchen. When handing over the dinner to Br Lafayette, he told him that the boy *'wouldn't be having any dinner'*. Later, the Brother called him out of his class and had him repeat what he said about the boy. After tea, Br Lafayette called him aside again, this time put him against the wall and asking him to repeat what he had said earlier. Once again, he repeated that the boy *'won't be having any dinner'*. Br Lafayette then produced the leather and gave him six hard slaps on the hands. Again, Br Lafayette asked him to repeat the message, and he was given six more hard slaps with the leather.
- 9.181** This cycle continued until, after about 30 slaps, Br Lafayette said to him *'You left him [the boy] having a fit on the floor, didn't you?'*, to which the boy responded *'yes'*. He was now willing to say *'anything to stop him from hitting me'*. Br Lafayette then *'fisted'* him in the face. He was left pumping blood, and Br Lafayette told him that that would *'teach you to tell me lies'*. The witness said he still had no idea why he was being punished in this way, but could only presume that the sick boy must have had a fit after he left him. He did not make a complaint about his treatment because, if you complained, you would get into *'deeper trouble'*.
- 9.182** This same former resident told the Investigation Committee that, apart from Br Lafayette and two other Brothers,¹⁵ *'it was a lovely school'*. He felt the rest of the Brothers did the best with what they had.

¹⁴ Br Aribert accepted that this was a fair summary of Br Lafayette.

¹⁵ Brs Archard and Kalle.

9.183 He also stated that Br Lafayette regularly interrogated him and other boys about sex and matters relating to it in his back room. In particular, he was asked to name other boys who were involved in sexual activity:

The first time it came on, he asked me, I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. And of course I got six of the best for basically telling lies.

9.184 After being punished for not being able to answer, he gave another boy's name:

I can still think of that man to this day, because I put him through the same trouble that I was in. And someone else probably put me in the same trouble because of what was going on.

9.185 Another former resident said that, because he was working in the kitchen and was under Br Lafayette's care, he was protected from beatings from other Brothers. On one occasion, Br Lafayette intervened to stop a severe beating from Br Bevis. He said that Br Lafayette went 'out of his way to ensure that nobody else laid a finger on me'. While Br Lafayette was in Tralee, 'nobody really beat me up or anything at all like that. But after he left then there were threats coming in from all sides'. He added that Br Lafayette had the reputation for being the 'hardest Brother' in the school. 'If he said "Jump", you said "How high?".'

9.186 Br Lafayette had spent two periods in Letterfrack in the 1940s and 1950s and also served in Artane. He transferred from Tralee to Glin in the 1960s.

The death of Robert Moore¹⁶ in late 1950s

9.187 In the late 1950s, Robert Moore, a pupil in the Industrial School, died in Tralee County Hospital. His death certificate recorded that he died from 'Bilateral Pleural Effusion. Senility. Certified'.¹⁷ He was 16 years of age at the time.

9.188 He had been transferred from St Philomena's in Stillorgan when he was seven, and had spent the next 10 years in Tralee. He was due for discharge some 10 months prior to his death, but had stayed on until a suitable placement was found for him as an apprentice shoemaker.

9.189 There has been considerable controversy and media speculation about the circumstances surrounding his death, and the Investigation Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses who were in the School at the time and recalled his death.

9.190 This controversy first began to emerge in 1995, when former pupils made allegations in the media that Robert Moore had received a severe beating from Br Lafayette in the refectory for refusing to eat his food, and that he had died some days later in hospital.

9.191 Br Bevis, who served as a teacher in Tralee for almost 10 years from the mid-1950s, told the Investigation Committee that one morning he was waking the boys when he noticed that Robert Moore had been sick during the night and that his vomit was blood stained. He summoned help from another Brother who used to look after the boys. The next time Br Bevis saw the boy was when he visited him in hospital. He recalled that it must have been on a Saturday as this was the only day he could go. He took the boy a copy of *The Kerryman* newspaper. He remembered that Robert Moore clung to his hand and, with hindsight, he realised that Robert appeared to have some sense that he was going to die. Br Bevis tried to console him by telling him he was not as ill as others in the hospital, as he did not realise at the time that the boy was near death. Robert Moore died on a Sunday and, although Br Bevis thought it was some days after his visit, it is more likely that he died the next day.

¹⁶ This is a pseudonym.

¹⁷ 'Senility' was subsequently changed to 'septicaemia'.

- 9.192** Br Bevis was asked whether he knew why the boy had gone into hospital, and he recalled that he did have a boil on his neck at that time. He later thought he had leukaemia, and only found out in more recent times that the cause of death was recorded as septicaemia.
- 9.193** He told the Investigation Committee that he did not recall any discussion at the time about Robert Moore being beaten by Br Lafayette, the Brother in charge of the refectory, and he did not know at the time that this beating had happened.
- 9.194** Br Chapin also told the Investigation Committee about going to see Robert Moore in hospital, he thought about a week before he died. The boy was *'not very lively'* but did not appear to be frightened. He did not think the boy had any insight into how ill he was. He said he did not hear any talk at the time about an incident between the boy and Br Lafayette. He did, however, remember one of the boys saying that Robert Moore was hurt. He thought that Robert Moore had something wrong with his lungs.
- 9.195** An internal report prepared in recent years and disclosed to the Committee by the Congregation entitled 'Information relating to Robert Moore' detailed the stories and allegations that began to emerge in 1995 surrounding the boy's death and the steps that were taken by the Congregation to enquire into the matter. The following extracts are of particular interest:
- As part of an internal enquiry, the Provincial Council approached a number of brothers who had been in Tralee in or around the time of the Moore incident. Br Bevis remembered Robert Moore well and visited him several times in hospital. He was able to recall the incident of the beating in the dining room but did not link it to the death of Robert Moore. Br Bevis was of the opinion that Robert Moore died from some form of cancer. It would appear that the time between the beating and the death of Robert Moore was at most a few weeks.
- The Provincial Council also went in search of Robert Moore's Death Certificate. On the Death Certificate, the cause of death is given as a "Bi-lateral Pleural Effusion". As an addendum to this cause of death, the phrase "senility certified" appears on the certificate. This seemed a rather strange addendum given Robert Moore's age, and a medical doctor was asked to explain the matter. The medical opinion was that pneumonia was the likely cause of death and that a beating would not cause a bi-lateral effusion, even a severe beating.
- Further enquiry unearthed a story that Robert Moore had an abscess on his neck, and that in the course of the beating he received, the abscess may have burst. There was no hard medical evidence for this story of the abscess, but it appeared to be part of the folklore around the event. The possibility of a flu epidemic in St. Joseph's at the time also surfaced. It was the month of February and flu epidemics were not an unlikely occurrences in institutions such as St. Joseph's at that time of year. A heavy dose of flu could lead to the bi-lateral effusion reported on the Death Certificate.
- 9.196** The report concluded with some recent information about the death certificate:
- The Gardai were aware of the "senility" addendum and reported back some time ago to St. Helen's saying that the Death Certificate had been officially changed and the word "septicaemia" substituted for the word "senility".
- 9.197** The recollection of Br Bevis in 1995, as described in this document, is in conflict with the evidence he gave the Committee concerning the beating from Br Lafayette.
- 9.198** In their Opening Statement the Christian Brothers gave the following account of what Br Bevis had recalled to them:

A former staff member, writing in 2001, recalls the occasion of Robert Moore's death: "I recall the morning I called the boys. As they arise and dressed I walked up and down the dormitory. Noticing that Robert had not arisen I went over to see him. As I neared the bed – situated nearest the wall and about mid-way down the dormitory – I noticed he had been sick during the night and there was blood in his vomit. I asked him how he felt and on telling me that he had been sick during the night I told him to stay in bed and that I would inform Br G – he usually looked after the sick. I did so and the doctor, Dr Walsh,¹⁸ was called. Later that day I learned that Robert was taken to hospital. A few days after I visited Robert in hospital, bringing him the local paper. As I sat beside the bed he caught hold of my hand and asked me if he was going to get better. This surprised me – the question and the fact that he held on to my hand during the visit. I had no idea that he was seriously ill. I told him that he would be out soon and told him that another boy had gone to the fever hospital ... that was a worse situation than his. I learned of his (Robert's) death shortly afterwards – not sure if it was the next day or a few days afterwards. Since then I have been wondering if Robert himself knew of his impending death – the fact of him holding my hand during the visit leads me to think that he did. I was always glad that I was there and tried to console him. May he rest in peace".

9.199 The Congregation concluded with the following observation:

The Brother's recollections show the caring attitude of the staff towards the boys and the reciprocal friendliness of the boy himself. The same caring attention would have been shown to all the boys in the school and every effort would have been made to sympathise with the other boys who had lost a companion and would have been shocked by a death within their small community. Modern counselling has methods of helping people cope with bereavement and though the efforts of the staff in the 1950's would not have been enlightened by present-day terms it would have been none the less sincere.

9.200 The Congregation did not allude to the incident in the dining room involving Br Lafayette in this section of their Opening Statement.

9.201 A three-day Visitation Report conducted one month after the death of Robert Moore made no mention of the death of a pupil in the previous month and described the boys as 'exceedingly happy'.

9.202 Br Lafayette was interviewed by the Gardaí. The following exchange was recorded:

A number of former pupils have stated that you assaulted Robert Moore and he died a few days later. What do you have to say about this.

I gave him a few slaps, but the medical evidence from the hospital would suggest that he died from some sort of lung trouble ...

Is there any reason why different pupils would make these allegations against you?

I don't know.

9.203 The Congregation have admitted that Robert Moore received a beating from Br Lafayette, but the severity of the beating was stated to be unknown.

9.204 A number of former residents gave evidence to the Investigation Committee about the incident.

9.205 One former resident said that Robert Moore had a boil on his neck and that Br Lafayette, who he said did not mean to hurt anybody, was hurrying the boys to finish their meal. He therefore hit the

¹⁸ This is a pseudonym.

boys, including the complainant, on the back. He said that it was a 'mild beating', not one that would 'kill you'. He said that Robert Moore got sick from that beating, as the boil was hit. He said:

Because he hit him in the neck where the boil was. He had a boil in the back of the neck which never healed and he went to bed that evening and he told me he was sick and the following morning he couldn't get out of bed because he was sick. The doctor came and the nurse was there and they were dressing him for a few days. The doctor decided to take him to St. Catharine's hospital when he was not recovering so quick.

9.206 He praised the Brother in charge of the infirmary for the way in which he tried to look after Robert Moore, but felt that he did not know how to do it properly as he was 'doctor and nurse and everything'. He thought that about a week or two passed before Robert Moore was eventually brought to hospital. He said that this was 'an accident that went wrong, a beating that went wrong'. Robert Moore was 'not murdered'.

9.207 Another former resident stated he was in bed sick when Robert Moore was being helped up the stairs into bed. He was 'whimpering feverishly' and the boy helping him told this witness that Br Lafayette was 'after killing him'. He dozed off and, when he woke up, Robert Moore's bed was empty. He died some days later in hospital.

- 9.208**
- **At this remove, it is not possible to state whether the beating Robert Moore received at the hands of Br Lafayette had anything to do with his death. What this story tells us about the general atmosphere in Tralee is significant. It is accepted that the Brother in charge of the refectory struck Robert Moore because he was not eating or because he was not eating quickly enough. It seems particularly cruel that the children could not even eat their meals without violence or the threat of violence.**
 - **It is clear from the evidence of individual Brothers that Br Lafayette's harshness to the boys was known about in Tralee but nothing was done to stop it. This incident in the refectory fits into a pattern of behaviour in the institution whereby violence was used to enforce discipline on the boys.**
 - **The fact that this boy died after being hit was sufficient reason to warrant a full inquiry, no matter what the cause of death on the death certificate. Only an immediate independent inquiry could have sorted out the issues arising out of this case. If the boy was already seriously ill, the inquiry could have investigated why he did not receive care earlier. If the beating contributed to his death, it could have established why that information did not come to be generally known and investigated as a possible causative factor.**
 - **This case has become controversial and subject to speculation because the circumstances of the boys death were never properly investigated.**

Complainant evidence of physical abuse by Brothers in Tralee

Severity of punishment

- 9.209** Complainants used the word ‘flogging’ to describe particularly severe punishment in Tralee.
- 9.210** A complainant accused one Brother, Br Boyce, of flogging him. He got a flogging from this Brother and half an hour later got one from another Brother, Br Cheney. He did not know why. Br Boyce hit him with a ‘leather’. *‘These leathers weren’t just light pieces of string, they were severe actually’*. The complainant stated that the attack was a painful moment for him as Br Boyce was ‘a very nice lad actually and I was surprised to be attacked like that’. It was uncharacteristic of the Brother. Br Boyce, who gave evidence to the Committee, denied flogging the boy.
- 9.211** Another witness said that Br Bevis:
- flogged a young boy ... [The boy] was a classmate of mine and he actually done something wrong with the bandmaster, I don’t know, and he was reported to Br Bevis who flogged him. That’s all I know. He put the boy’s head in between his legs and he flogged him ferociously, beat him very badly. This boy actually eventually ended up in the mental hospital in Killarney.*
- 9.212** Br Bevis denied beating this boy.
- 9.213** Another witness also recalled an occasion when about 12 boys were ‘picked up’ for masturbating in the dormitory and lined up and bent over the beds with their nightshirts up. Br Bevis and another Brother took turns in giving the boys ‘the hop’, i.e. pulling up the nightshirt and hitting them straight across the bare bottom, six to a dozen times. The witness stated that this happened quite a lot and the boys were all ‘frightened to death’.
- 9.214** Another former resident claimed that Br Cheney would ask him to stay back after class and to drop his pants. Br Cheney would then ‘leather’ his bottom. This happened ‘many times’ until he was 16. The complainant thought Br Cheney did it because of ‘madness’. This also happened to other boys in the class. He said that he also had to receive hospital treatment after Br Cheney hit him. He thought he hit some part of his brain. This same complainant said that Br Cheney gave him the second of two floggings half an hour apart from each other and that he ‘feared’ this man.
- 9.215** One witness made allegations of physical abuse against a Br Roland. He said that the boys were playing in the schoolroom one day, and one boy got hit in the eye. Br Roland asked who did it but no one answered. The Brother then pointed to him. Later that day, Br Roland took him into an empty classroom and asked him if he was the culprit. He said no. The Brother got a strap out of a glass cupboard containing different straps and told him to get on his knees and put his hands out. He continued to deny his involvement in the incident but Br Roland said he was telling lies. He said he received 44 strokes on each hand, the second 44 so that he would not lie again. He remembers waking in the dormitory some days later with bandaged hands. They were very painful.
- 9.216** Br Bevis in his evidence said he was aware of one occasion when Br Cheney and Br Chance punished a boy in a dormitory when he was caught abusing a younger boy. He acknowledged that he had heard that it was a particularly severe punishment.

Pervasiveness of punishment

- 9.217** Witnesses gave evidence that punishment was unpredictable and unavoidable. Punishment was a feature both inside and outside the classroom. Even Brothers with whom they had a reasonably good relationship could suddenly turn and lash out with the leather or their fists.

- 9.218** One former resident recalled an incident where a boy in the farmyard had an argument with Br Toussnint who then picked up a pitchfork and threw it at the boy, pinning his jacket to the cowshed door. The boy ran up to the yard and the boys hid him when the Brother came looking for him. This was a Brother who was not regarded as severe in his dealings with the boys as a rule.
- 9.219** Brothers against whom there were few complaints could flare up and lose their tempers, and in such situations were not restrained. The culture of the school allowed them to lash out against boys.
- 9.220** One complainant gave evidence about Br Archard who taught boys in second class who would, if the boys did not know an answer, *'give you the knuckles on the head. It was very, very sore'*. He did not know if other people got the same treatment, although he did not regard it as out of the ordinary: *'corporal punishment was there anyway so they were only doing what was being done'*.
- 9.221** One witness said Br Bevis physically assaulted him in the classroom, schoolyard and recreation hall. He was slapped with the strap that Br Bevis carried, not just on the hands. He does not know which classroom this was in, but it could have been any as he did chores for the Brothers. Br Bevis did not teach him. Br Bevis acknowledged that he may have slapped this boy, but denied beating any boy over the body or head or breaking bones. He only punished boys on the hands or maybe gave a clip on the bottom, on the trousers.
- 9.222** Br Bevis said that he never hit any boy on the bare bottom and never saw any other Brother do so.
- 9.223** One other witness confirmed that Br Kalle *'often used the leather and his fists'* and that he received both forms of punishment on a lot of occasions, mostly in class but once outside class. Boys were punished for getting questions wrong.¹⁹ It was done routinely, in second and third class. Once, he was punched for talking and his nose bled. He did not remember seeing the Brother punch other boys.
- 9.224** Another witness said that Br Cheney would ask him a difficult question that he was unable to answer, and then he would call him to the blackboard. He would be too frightened to answer and Br Cheney would then get his head and beat it across the blackboard. He also beat him on the legs. This happened *'quite often'*. He urinated with fear on the way up to the blackboard and Br Cheney called him in front of the class about it and made him clean it up. This has remained in his mind over the years.
- 9.225** On another occasion, this witness stated that he and two other boys went to the cinema without permission. He busked for the money. When they returned, a Brother lined up all the boys in the yard and asked the three of them where they got the money for the cinema. One said the complainant had sung for it. Then the Brother said that there would be no film for the school that Sunday as a result. For the rest of the weekend, he and the other boys with whom he went into town were beaten quite badly by the other pupils. The Brothers watched the beatings.
- 9.226** He went on to say that this Brother was a *'very dominant person'* and a *'very large man'*. A lot of his experiences with him *'were never very good; very, very brutal'*.
- 9.227** Br Bevis and Br Cheney were described in a Visitation Report as zealous, devoted to their work and quite happy at it, and they and other Brothers were *'excellent men'* carrying *'the lion's share of the supervision of the boys'* and only ever having the welfare of the boys as their interest. Br Bevis was described as *'an ideal Brother for Industrial School work'* and another Visitation Report noted that an inspector to the school had commended Br Bevis for his work.

¹⁹ He confirmed also that it was not the general rule that you would be punished if you failed in your homework or schoolwork at class.

The use of the strap

- 9.228** It was usual for Brothers to carry straps at all times. According to one witness, one Brother used a strap that had been stiffened with coins. He said that he saw a Brother flogging a boy with a belt, and suddenly coins came flying out of the belt when the stitching on the belt had come undone. He said that he knew that it was a *'continued practice'* of putting coins in the leather strap, because another boy who worked in the shoe shop said that it was his job to put the coins into the belts.
- 9.229** Another witness recalled how he was in the cobbler's shop one day and somebody who worked there pointed out Br Cheney's leather strap to him. He told the Committee, *'The whole front of it was all loaded down with washers. That was Br Cheney's leather strap. We used to wonder why it was so hard'*.
- 9.230** He said that Br Cheney used the strap on him once only, but he would use it on other boys *'quite frequently'* on the hands.
- 9.231** The leather could be used at any time of the day or in any place. It was used first thing in the morning, during classes, during recreation, during meal times, and in the dormitory at night. Brothers carried the strap around with them at all times and therefore could use it instantly without accountability and without a cooling off period. This led to frequent excessive punishments and to the boys having a pervasive expectation of receiving punishment.
- 9.232** The regulations and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and the Christian Brothers for the protection of boys in the care of these institutions were not followed. Punishment was not just inflicted on the hands, but was inflicted all over the body, including the bare bottom and even the feet.
- 9.233** For boys who ran away the punishment was more severe, A documented incident occurred in 1943 when several boys were punished for absconding by having their food rationed for a week in addition to being given six or nine strokes depending on their age.
- 9.234** There were no sanctions for Brothers who perpetrated excessive punishments.
- 9.235** As with all other Christian Brothers' institutions, Tralee had no punishment book, notwithstanding an instruction from the Visitor in 1937 to procure one.

Climate of fear

- 9.236** Although none of the respondents spoke of a climate of fear in Tralee, Professor Tom Dunne, a former Brother, referred in an article he wrote to such an atmosphere:
- It was a secret, enclosed world, run on fear; the boys were wholly at the mercy of the staff, who seemed to have entirely negative views of them.²⁰
- 9.237** A number of former residents who gave evidence spoke of the fear they lived under while in the School, which was caused by some individual Brothers and the atmosphere of the School in general.

²⁰ Professor Tom Dunne, 'Seven Years in the Brothers' Dublin Review (Spring 2002).

9.238 One witness, resident in the school in the 1940s, spoke particularly about the climate of fear in the school. He said:

No, it was a constant fear of them really. It was a constant fear. There was no "how do you do, well met" kind of thing. There was no "how do you do, how are you this morning?" whatever, there was never a kind word.

9.239 Another witness said that the environment was one 'of constant fear and that fear overrode everything else for me'. He said that it was a 'frightening' place and that he was 'terrified of the place'. This witness was in the school from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s and had spent all of his earlier life in other institutions.

Lay staff

9.240 Former residents made allegations of physical abuse against some lay staff. One witness, who was in the school in the 1940s, told the Committee that the night watchman would give him a 'wallop' for having wet the bed.

9.241 Another witness made a number of complaints against lay staff. First, he mentioned a lay teacher who tried to get him to march properly and threw chairs at him and hit him. He said that one of the lay teachers would be 'on the prowl' where the boys went to darn socks with the nurse or to the tailor to get measured. 'If he saw you you were dead unlucky because he would grab you by the knackers and squeeze you until you scream for mercy'. If he could not catch you, 'he would chuck a chisel at you or something'.

Admissions and acknowledgements of excessive punishments

9.242 Brothers who gave evidence made some admissions regarding the extent of corporal punishment in Tralee.

9.243 Br Bevis was Principal in the primary school from the mid-1950s to early 1960s. In his evidence to the Committee, he said he accepted that he may have given a boy a clip on the bottom with the leather strap or on the ear. He also said that he never saw marks on any boy from abuse or excessive corporal punishment by any other teacher. He would have noticed marks 'when they were coming up to be examined before going to bed' if the marks were on the upper body or, if they were wearing short pants, on their legs.

9.244 Br Aribert told the Committee that it was never addressed when a Brother acted in breach of the guidelines on corporal punishment that were set down in their Acts of Chapter. He acknowledged that some Brothers probably overstepped them at times.

9.245 Br Mahieu acknowledged that from time to time he would have used a strap on the boys in Tralee, in particular for bed-wetting:

I had my six hours teaching day job to do. I was then put in charge of the dormitory ... I now discover that there is such a thing as bedwetting, persistent bedwetting. I was not able to cope with that. Partly the reason I wasn't able to cope with that was that there wasn't sufficient back-up facilities or persons to help me with that ... sheets are wet. How do you dry them? There was some kind of a laundry there, to me it was very old fashioned looking, just full of steam and things like that ... I found it very difficult ... The result with not coping with it would be that it was a headache. It was something which wore me down after a while. It would mean that I could hit somebody, beat somebody ... using the strap didn't work either. But I would just physically at times get tired, get frustrated and would use the strap and I bitterly regret that. I have always said that and admitted that a way back. I regret it, that that's the way I tried to cope. But it was putting me into almost an impossible situation.

9.246 He regretted using the leather, he regretted overusing it, but only recalled one occasion when he used it excessively, i.e. unduly severely.

9.247 Br Bevis told the Committee that he never discussed the carrying out of corporal punishment with other Brothers. He said:

No, I never discussed it, because if I was I was in charge that particular time. If the other Brother was in charge that was their duty.

Bullying by other boys

9.248 Bullying amongst the boys occurred in Tralee and, although this bullying involved physical beatings and sexual assaults, there was no procedure for reporting such behaviour to the Brothers in charge.

9.249 One complainant referred to boys who left at age 16 but returned *'because things didn't work out for them'*. They beat and bullied the smaller boys. When asked whether he could go to the Brothers for protection, he said no, that there was no system for protecting boys from that kind of bullying.

9.250 Another complainant, reiterating this, said that the Brothers never asked him questions about bullying. He said that the Brothers:

were always standoffish, you did what you're told and that was it. They didn't make you feel like you could come to them with a complaint because you were frightened to go near them in case you got a beating for making a complaint.

9.251 This complainant also said that, if an older boy beat a younger boy, a Brother would not ask what happened. Such beatings happened *'on several occasions'*.

9.252 Another man explained that a group of boys had told him that they would protect him if he would be their *'boyfriend'*. This meant that if he masturbated them they would stop the other boys bullying him. He said that his failure to co-operate led to him being beaten by *'some of the school bullies'*.

9.253 One complainant who was in the school in the 1940s said that he was bullied by other boys and had:

many the thick lip and many the black eye for no reason whatsoever. But I wasn't one to fight back, I never was. I was bullied by the boys I think because, you know, I was different. I wasn't brought in from the country for some mischief or something or another.

9.254 Another complainant said that he was beaten up for being a *'pet'*. He described the situation as follows:

When I say a pet, a pet would be the kind of person that would be hanging on to a Brother and, the other boys, especially the bigger boys, would perceive that you were telling them everything that was going on. Now, there was incidents where boys used to rebel and like – at one time they went downtown, a lot of boys from the school went downtown and raided Woolworths downtown and, took a lot of stuff out of Woolworths, a lot of boys now. Obviously, like, the Brothers wanted to know where the stuff was. So we were the pets like and, of course, we would tell them everything. Where the stuff was ... You were picked on then because you were small and you were trying to get protection from the Brother. But in actual fact, like, the Brother couldn't protect you because you were out amongst all the boys and the boys would beat you up. If they said to you "if you tell a Brother, we'll beat you, you are going to be killed the next time again".

9.255 He went on to say that they would get you:

Anywhere in the school. The school is only a small place that you can go in, it is one square little area like. You couldn't go far unless you ran away ... you wouldn't get a bad beating, like, in a sense you wouldn't need hospitalisation or anything like that, no. You got a belt across the head, a kick that kind of a way. "If you say anything like, we will beat you up again". It wasn't that the Brothers could protect you it was that kind of an environment.

9.256 The majority of the Christian Brothers who gave evidence on this issue were unaware of its being a problem. Four Brothers who were in Tralee during the 1950s and 1960s said that they were aware that occasional bullying occurred. Br Bevis said that he would deal with it when he came across it.

9.257 Br Boyce conceded that, although he never experienced any bullying or preying on the younger boys by the older ones, the boys were very clever and he would not know that it was going on. No boy ever came to him and he said that, if you asked a boy, he would not tell because the others would retaliate.

9.258 Br Mahieu stated that he and three other Brothers whom he named were aware that there were complaints from younger boys about bullying and molesting. He also told the Committee that he spoke to the boys about homosexual behaviour but was not asked to do this by the Resident Manager. He did it because of the complaints by the boys about being bullied, physically and sexually. He said that Tralee was a *'reasonably happy type of place'* before 1966. Then it *'changed radically, dramatically'* when the schools in Glin and Upton closed, and boys from those schools came to Tralee. The boys who came to Tralee were very streetwise, aggressive and tough. There were more fights, bullying and running away, and stealing became a regular feature of life in the School.

- 9.259**
- **Bullying was part of life in Tralee and contributed to a climate of fear that pervaded the Institution.**
 - **Violence by bigger boys on smaller went unreported and unpunished.**
 - **Relations between bigger and smaller boys echoed those between the Brothers and the boys, in being characterised by the use of physical power.**

Conclusions on physical abuse

- 1. Physical aggression was a means of communication between Brothers and boys and was used to control the large number of boys that were in Tralee.**
- 2. The efforts of the Superior General in the late 1930s to reduce corporal punishment in Christian Brothers' institutions were an indication of an unease at a high level at the amount of corporal punishment in these schools generally. There was, however, no evidence that his warnings and exhortations were heeded or that measures were put in place to ensure that punishments were kept within the guidelines.**
- 3. The story of Br Marceau indicated that excessive punishment only became a concern when it endangered interests such as the reputation of the Congregation or when it ran the risk that litigation would be instituted, but not when it endangered boys. The sequence of events as revealed by the documentation in the Br Marceau case was an example of uncaring and reckless management by the Congregation, which had serious consequences for the children involved.**
- 4. The evidence of physical punishment and fear reported by complainant witnesses was confirmed by some respondent evidence and by the information inferred from the documentary materials.**

5. Younger boys were not protected from older boys and were subjected to physical and sexual bullying. The authorities in Tralee did not provide a safe or secure environment for these children.

Sexual abuse

Christian Brothers' Statement

9.260 In their Opening Statement, the Christian Brothers stated that there was no reference in any of the surviving correspondence, annals or Visitation Reports to boys being sexually abused by Brothers or staff members. Had there been an allegation, the problem would have been dealt with in keeping with the practice at the time. They outlined this practice as follows:

- (i) It would have been reported to a higher authority.
- (ii) The Brother would have been removed from the school.
- (iii) The allegation would have been investigated.
- (iv) If the offence was proved true, the Brother would have been censured in the following manner:
 - (a) if not finally professed, the Brother was generally dismissed.
 - (b) if finally professed, he was called to headquarters, given a Canonical Warning and transferred from the scene of his misbehaviour.
 - (c) if the abuse was repeated, the finally professed Brother was usually dismissed or advised to seek a canonical dispensation in order to pre-empt dismissal.

Br Pipere²¹

9.261 Br Piperel taught in Tralee for a year in the late 1930s. He had been moved there from Letterfrack where he had been the subject of a serious complaint that he was sexually interfering with boys. At the time of the complaint, Br Piperel had been in Letterfrack for some eight years and he continued his career there for another four years. Thereafter, he served in other industrial schools for almost 10 years. The records contained complaints about the Brother's work and attitude in these institutions, but did not record incidents of sexual impropriety.

Br Garon

9.262 The Christian Brothers have acknowledged that one Brother, Br Garon, 'behaved in an inappropriate manner in the boys' showers'.

9.263 Br Garon was almost 60 years old when he arrived in Tralee, where he worked for almost 20 years from the early 1950s.

9.264 Three witnesses recalled inappropriate behaviour on the part of Br Garon.

9.265 The first of these witnesses was in Tralee in the mid-1950s. He said that Br Garon regularly took a shower with the boys. He would wash them and get them to wash him including his private parts.

9.266 The second witness said that he was aware that this Brother had showers with the boys but he said it *'didn't interfere with me in any way'*.

²¹ This is a pseudonym.

9.267 The third witness recalled washing Br Garon, who used to get into the showers with the small boys. The boys used to wash each other's backs and Br Garon used to do the same. This went on for 'a while'. He said that they thought it was 'the norm'.

Observations on Br Garon's behaviour by two separate Brothers

9.268 In a Garda statement responding to allegations made against him, Br Marceau acknowledged that Br Garon used to be in the showers with the boys. He said:

On one occasion I had reason to look for Br Garon who was in the showers with the boys and he and the boys were naked. I was shocked and never approved of that.

9.269 A second Brother, Br Lisle,²² made a supplemental statement in January 2006 in relation to alleged sexual abuse by Br Garon. In it, he recalled that boys had made complaints to him about this Brother. The solicitors for the Christian Brothers informed the Committee in a letter dated 27th January 2006 of the information given to them by Br Lisle. The letter explained that, during the course of a meeting between Br Lisle and the Deputy Provincial of St Helen's Province on 16th January 2006, Br Lisle disclosed that, when he was in Tralee, a number of boys had made 'allegations of sexual impropriety' against Br Garon, and that he had told the Resident Managers of these allegations at the time. The Committee was also advised that, insofar as the Deputy Provincial knew, this was the first time that the Brother had made these allegations.

9.270 In the statement made four days later, on 31st January, Br Lisle explained that about four or five boys between the ages of nine and 16 complained to him that they were reluctant to go for showers because Br Garon would 'interfere with them while in the showers'. They said that Br Garon would shower them and request that they wash him also. Br Garon would be naked with them in the showers. The boys also told him that Br Garon would take a boy from the yard for an 'individual shower' every day.

9.271 Br Lisle went on to state that he had relayed the complaints to three Resident Managers,²³ and he had assumed they had reported them to the 'relevant people'. He now realised that that was not the case, and that was why he was bringing the matter to the Commission's attention.

9.272 When giving evidence to the Committee, Br Lisle said that the allegations against Br Garon had not come as a great shock to him, as Br Garon himself used to take boys off the yard, telling him that he had to 'bring this boy for a shower'.

9.273 When this happened, he reported it to Br Sinclair,²⁴ the first of the three Resident Managers. His complaint was dismissed and he was told, 'Oh don't mind that man, sure, he was in China for years'. He could not remember the word used by the first boy when complaining to him, but he believed it was something like 'fiddling'. He did not recall if he went to Br Sinclair with complaints more than once, but it is possible that he did, since several boys would be talking about it. His view at the time was that he had done enough by telling Br Sinclair because he would 'let him look after it'. He did not go back to the boy to follow up on it. Br Garon, however, kept giving showers.

9.274 When that Resident Manager was replaced, Br Lisle reported the matter to his successor, Br Millard, who was only Resident Manager for a matter of weeks. He cannot remember what that Resident Manager said to him, but he accepted that he must not have been happy with his predecessor's response. Br Lisle also told the Committee that he was with Br Millard on one occasion when a boy came up and said that Br Garon wanted him for a shower. He turned to Br Millard and told him that he thought there was more than just showering going on. It was crystal

²² This Brother worked in Tralee from the mid-1960s to 1970.

²³ There were three Resident Managers during Br Lisle's time in Tralee: Brs Sinclair, Millard and Roy.

²⁴ Br Sinclair was Resident Manager for a period of six years in the 1960s.

clear what was being alleged, but, according to Br Lisle, the boy probably still went for the shower. He said that his understanding was that the boys did not *'like it and that they were trying to have it stopped, they didn't want to be interfered with, as they said'*. He thought Br Garon took these showers with the boys when they were taken from the yard, as opposed to during the normal Saturday night showers.

9.275 When the third Resident Manager, Br Roy, took over, Br Lisle again reported the boys' complaints about Br Garon's activity in the showers. He did not know if Br Roy did anything, but he now knows that the information did not go to *'headquarters'*.

9.276 Br Lisle said that it never occurred to him to tell the Brothers who were carrying out the Visitations, as he thought other Brothers would have reported it. He thought all the others knew about it. He was just the *'junior member of staff'* and he did not think it was his place to confront Br Garon. He said that there were *'more senior men there than me to confront him'*.

9.277 He told the Committee that the boys were not embarrassed or awkward when they were complaining to him, and had no difficulty articulating the complaint. He believed they would have been talking about it amongst themselves.

9.278 He had told the Deputy Provincial in January 2006 that Br Garon was abusing the boys *'most of the time'*. He had not talked about it to anyone between 1970 and 2006. His understanding had been that *'headquarters'* knew all about Br Garon, because he had told every Resident Manager.

What the documents said about Br Garon

9.279 None of the Visitation Reports over the 20-year period that Br Garon spent in Tralee refers to any complaints of this nature being made against him, so there is very little in the documentation to assist the Committee in the consideration of this case.

9.280 One Visitation Report in the early 1950s noted Br Garon was ill. In fact, he was absent from the School for approximately eight months that year. Br Garon became Sub-Superior in the mid-1950s. In a Visitation Report compiled over a year after his appointment, he is described as being *'fairly well; he rises late and retires early; he has no school work but takes the boys for morning and evening prayers and gives a hand in the games and supervision during the out of class hours'*. Later Visitation Reports both noted his poor health, and the latter noted that his Superior had *'the utmost confidence in him'*. His poor health was again noted in the Visitation Reports in the early 1960s. In the 1962 Visitation Report the following extract is of interest:

The Superior says that the Sub-Superior, Br Garon, is the most useful man in the place. Despite his deafness and indifferent health he is on the go all the time, doing endless little jobs that are most essential to a place such as St. Joseph's. He acts as Infirmarian, supervises the play yard, takes the boys for basketball in the yard, checks on all kinds of odds and ends and is generally most useful. He is in charge of the baths also and supervises the health of the boys generally.

9.281 His health was deteriorating by the mid-1960s and, in the 1966 Visitation Report, he was described as *'almost totally deaf but continued to do good work'*. By 1967 he was as *'deaf as a stone'*. The following year, it was noted that he was unable to take part in any Community conversations but busied himself as sacristan.

The evidence of other former members of staff

9.282 In addition to Br Lisle, four other former members of staff who had been in the School when Br Garon was there gave evidence to the Committee about him.

- 9.283** Br Bevis said that he never heard any mention of Br Garon's being naked in the showers with the boys nor had he heard allegations of his acting inappropriately. He said that he never heard it discussed among the Brothers that he might have been in the showers with the boys, although he did acknowledge that it may in fact have been so discussed after his time.
- 9.284** Another member of staff, Br Mahieu, told the Committee that he was placed in charge of the showers, taking over from Br Garon, in approximately 1966. He did not know why this change took place, but said it was possibly because the Resident Manager, Br Sinclair, had asked him. When he took over, he insisted on the showers being upgraded and that was done. He knew '*absolutely nothing*' about allegations that Br Garon took boys for individual showers on days other than Saturdays when he might not have been in charge. At such times the water would have been cold. He had never heard anything about Br Garon interfering with the boys in the showers, washing them or requiring them to wash him. He had '*never heard it discussed*'.
- 9.285** Br Aribert stated that he did not recall the subject of Br Garon's showering with the boys being discussed. He told the Committee, however, that he did recall some of the boys not wanting to go to the showers but they never told him why. He felt it was because boys of that age did not like to shower in the middle of winter. He added, '*it wasn't for the reason that they were being abused that came across to me*'. He never heard any boy complain about the '*supposed carry on*' with the Brother. If Br Garon was abusing boys, he did not know how a tiny community could not be aware of it. He also told the Committee that he believed someone else was in charge of the showers when Br Garon was still there. He did not know why Br Garon was taken off that job.
- 9.286** Another Brother, Br Chapin, said that he never heard any discussion among the Brothers about Br Garon in the showers with the boys, or anything of that nature.

What the Christian Brothers said

- 9.287** Br Garon was not mentioned in either the Opening Statement furnished by the Christian Brothers or in the Phase I or Phase III evidence.
- 9.288** In their Final Submission to the Investigation Committee, the Christian Brothers accepted that the evidence relating to Br Garon suggested that he 'did behave in an inappropriate manner in the boys' showers'. They stated that the extent to which he engaged in inappropriate conduct was obviously a matter for the Committee and said that it was worth noting that there was a 'broad spectrum of evidence on this issue'. They believed that some allegations against Br Garon were 'exaggerated' but accepted that, even if his 'activities went no further than requiring the boys to wash him ... this was totally inappropriate'. They also accepted that 'from today's perspective, it would seem to be unwise to allow one adult to supervise showers on a continual and consistent basis without any monitoring of that adult. This appears to have been what happened'.
- 9.289** The Submission conceded that the decision to place Br Garon in charge of the showers 'was an error which was compounded by a lack of appreciation of the risks that might arise in such a situation'.
- 9.290** The Submission also stated that Br Garon's activities in the showers took place when there was group showering and that 'he did not have the authority, nor was it the practice, that he would take individual boys for showers'. This is not, however, borne out by the evidence of Br Lisle who made the statement in January 2006. The Congregation repeated its puzzlement at the evidence of Br Lisle that he had informed three Resident Managers of his 'suspicions/complaints'. The Submissions also stated that the Congregation believed that the Resident Managers in question would not have ignored 'complaints of this nature'.

- 9.291**
- Br Garon's behaviour went on for many years, and was known to three Superiors, but they did nothing about it.
 - The Brother who reported the complaints of boys and who confirmed that Br Garon was taking them into the showers was a very junior member of the Congregation in Tralee, and he felt that his conscience was clear when he complained and left it to the Superior to deal with the problem. Br Lisle, who made these repeated complaints to the Superiors did not pursue the matter further, for example by mentioning it to the Visitors. Neither did he make a written complaint to the Provincial. This reflects on the sense of discipline that was inculcated and which would have operated particularly on a junior Brother in the Institution.
 - It is likely that over such a long period other Brothers in Tralee knew about Br Garon's behaviour.
 - Nothing is recorded about these complaints in the discovered material. Superiors chose to keep matters to themselves and did not report on to the Provincial or the Visitor. If they did, the Visitors did not to make a note of it or do anything about it. This is an example of the under-recording and under-reporting of sexual abuse.
 - The Brothers would have dealt severely with boys behaving in the showers in the way that Br Garon did. The moral issues or the corrupting effect of the Brother's behaviour was not dealt with.
 - The fact that Br Garon behaved openly in this way is evidence of his confidence that he would not be challenged. Br Lisle recalled how Br Garon would select a particular boy to bring to the shower. The audacity of Br Garon is striking and is another reason why this case is a very serious one for the Congregation.

Br Marceau

9.292 Br Marceau was moved to Tralee for the second time after cracking a boy's jaw in Glin. One witness told the Committee that, during class, Br Marceau would stand him between his knees and put his arms around him and hug him into him. Sometimes he put his face on his shoulder, up against his face. Eventually, he would start putting his hand down the back of his trousers and fondling his bottom. This went on for 'a period of time'. Br Marceau would call him up to the front of the classroom where this would happen. The other boys could not see what was happening and this happened to him a dozen times, maybe more.

9.293 This same complainant also said that, on one occasion, Br Marceau told him to stay behind after class and called him to his desk, after the others had left. He put him between his knees and put his arms around him. He told him to read his book and then he put one of his hands down the back of the complainant's trousers and the other hand down the front. When he then started to open the buttons on the front, the complainant began to struggle. Br Marceau pulled him tighter but he got loose and ran to the door. Br Marceau caught him as he got to the door and pulled him away from the door. The complainant banged into a desk, hurting himself. He was crying at this stage and shouted at Br Marceau to leave him alone. Br Marceau started to hit the complainant over the head and told him to shut up. The classroom door opened, and Br Millard came in and told Br Marceau to leave the boy alone. He did not ask the complainant about it. After that, he was never called up to the front of the class again. The beatings did, however, continue in the classroom.

9.294 The witness was asked whether there were any Brothers to whom he felt he could speak about difficulties such as the way he was being treated by Br Marceau in class. He said no there were not, 'you never went to a Christian Brother and told him your problem'. More specifically, he could not complain about what Br Marceau was doing because he did not know if the other Brother

would believe him. If he did not, he might get 'a *hiding*', and then Br Marceau would be told and he would get a '*worse hiding*' from him for telling lies.

9.295 He had no recollection or sense of this Brother being supervised or watched after the Brother intervened in the classroom on the occasion mentioned above.

Sexual activity among the boys

9.296 One complainant, who was in Tralee in the 1940s, told the Investigation Committee that he knew there was '*a lot of shenanigans*' going on between the boys in toilets and out in fields. They would be '*playing with each other*' but he kept clear of that. The Resident Manager would call the boys in and question them on whether they were involved in sexual activities amongst themselves. He also said, however, that there was no talk between the boys and the Brothers about this '*sex thing*', but the stigma was there and the boys would use it against each other in an argument, saying '*at least I wasn't called in for Question Time*'.²⁵ No boy wanted to let anybody know that they had been called in for '*Question Time*'.

9.297 Another complainant referred to abusive sexual activity among the boys. A witness from the late 1960s told the Committee that older boys would congregate around the toilet in the yard, and that the younger boys would be afraid of going in there for fear of being beaten or molested by them. The younger boys used go in to the toilet in threes and fours in order to be protected from the older boys:

We didn't know what was going to happen in there, whether we were getting a hiding from the older boys or what else they would do to you. It was just that thing in there and, if you did get a hiding you didn't go speak about it you kept it to yourself ... There was a fear of being sexually abused as well, yes ... It was supposed to happen to the younger lads but I can't say definitely whether it did or not.

9.298 This witness said at night the older boys would try to get into the smaller boys' beds. They terrorised them. He said this happened to him on a number of occasions with different boys and he would just shout out. He explained:

So every time you'd start roaring they would get up, they would give you a slap in the head and they would threaten that if you opened your mouth they would get you the next day.

9.299 He also confirmed, however, that the boys kept the peer abuse to themselves. The Brothers would not have known what was going on in the toilets unless they saw it themselves. To his knowledge, this never happened. He acknowledged that it was a continuous problem for the younger boys but it was not spoken about. You kept to yourself because you did not know whom to trust, '*so you managed to stay on your own*'.

9.300 He also told of one occasion when an older boy told him to climb a ladder on the farm one day if he wanted to see some kittens. When he was climbing the ladder the older boy put his hands up his pants and started fondling him. He kicked him away and ran.

9.301 Another complainant said that he had been abused by other boys of around the same age on more than one occasion. This complainant said that he had told Br Mahieu the names of the boys who were abusing him but nothing came of his complaint. During the course of his evidence, Br Mahieu said that he would try to get younger boys to give him a name but they never would.

²⁵ Question Time was a radio programme

9.302 Another former resident also referred to Br Lafayette as being a Brother who regularly interrogated the boys about sex and matters relating to it. He did this in the back room. *'The first time it came on, he asked me, I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. And of course I got six of the best for basically telling lies'*. After being punished for not being able to answer, the former resident then gave another boy's name. He regretted that he had told on another boy, but said he was being severely beaten at the time.

What the respondents had to say about peer abuse

9.303 Of all the former members of staff who gave evidence, only one, Br Mahieu, said complaints about peer abuse had been made to him. He said that younger boys would complain that they were being bullied or molested by other boys. He tried to get them to give a name but they never did. He said that he did suspect that there was sexual abuse going on between the boys but he never *'actually became aware of it'*, or of an incident or perpetrator. In response to the complaints, he would try to be as vigilant as he could be while on yard duty. He would change his pattern of patrolling the yard. He never checked for sexual abuse in the dormitories because he was never aware that it went on there. He would check to see if everything was *'okay'*, that *'the majority of them would be asleep'*. He never found sexual activity there.

9.304 He named other Brothers, including Br Cheney, whom he said were aware of the boys' complaints in that regard. He concluded that they must have spoken to one another about it.

9.305 Of the other former members of staff who gave evidence, only two acknowledged being aware of particular instances of peer sexual abuse.

9.306 The first of these Brothers, Br Aribert, said that there was only one case while he was there of a boy complaining of being sexually abused by another boy. He said that it was dealt with, but did not give any further details. Br Bevis recalled an occasion when a boy was punished by two Brothers for abusing a younger boy.

9.307 The other respondent witnesses claimed to have never encountered peer abuse. This included Br Boyce, who acknowledged that the boys were very clever and he would not know if it was going on. He also said that no boy ever told him he was being bullied or preyed on. He also said that, if you thought it was happening and asked a boy, *'he wouldn't tell you anyway'* because the *'others would give out to him'*. Br Chapin said that, although he was aware of the possibility of sexual activity among the boys, he never came across it. He said that the Brothers were warned to keep an eye out for *'bullying and for anything else'*. He disagreed that there was an obsession in uncovering that kind of activity in Tralee. Another respondent, Br Lisle, was not aware of sexual activity between the boys.

- 9.308**
- **An inadequate and indifferent regime of supervision allowed older boys to prey on younger boys .**
 - **Bullying and intimidation occurred unchecked, which was frightening and demoralising, especially for younger children who did not feel the Brothers would protect them.**
 - **The evidence of a boy being beaten by a Brother, in order to get names of other boys involved in sexual activity, describes a practice in Tralee that was common to other Christian Brother institutions. It resulted in unreliable information being given under duress, and often initiated a cycle of further beatings and revelations.**

Neglect

- 9.309** The Congregation acknowledged that the emotional needs of children in its care were not properly provided for. The reason for this failure was, it was claimed, a lack of awareness of what these emotional needs were, rather than any deliberate policy on the part of the Congregation to ignore them. In the General Chapter on the Christian Brothers, the position of the Congregation on the issue of emotional and physical care is outlined.
- 9.310** Physical care and education, they claimed, were the main concern. The question remains whether the quality of 'physical care' in Tralee was of the required standard for the time.

Physical care: financial matters

Payment of monies to St Mary's, Tralee

- 9.311** In the 1940 Visitation Report, the Visitor noted that, when the St Mary's and St Joseph's Communities in Tralee were separated, it was arranged that St Joseph's should contribute £600 per annum to St Mary's 'to help towards liquidating the debt on the new Secondary School'. It was noted that this sum had been paid regularly up to 1938 but, as of 14th January 1940, it had not been paid for 1939.²⁶
- 9.312** An undated document stated that the accounts of St Mary's and St Joseph's were to be separated on 1st July 1932, and that a separate account was opened on 11th August 1932 for St. Joseph's. This document also referred to various accounting matters and stated:
- In view of these uncertainties but chiefly in view of the fact that St. Joseph's will have to pay £600 a year for the next ten years to lessen St. Mary's debt it may be just to decide that St. Mary's should forego any claim it may have for a refund of part of this sum of £802.
- 9.313** In 1940, there were 120 boys in Tralee. As of 4th January 1939, the capitation grant payable by the Department in respect of boys over six years of age to industrial schools was seven shillings and six pence. This amounted to a total of £19.10.00 per child per annum. The sum of £600, therefore, amounted to the annual capitation grant for 25% of the school population.
- 9.314** The capitation grant was paid to these schools for the care and welfare of the children, not to fund private secondary schools for the Congregation. Siphoning off 25% of the school income for the benefit of the Congregation was wrong, particularly where conditions in Tralee were barely adequate. The Congregation did not address this issue in its Opening Statement or its Final Submission.

Building fund

- 9.315** As early as 1935, there were references in the Visitation Reports and annals to money being paid into a building fund/Baldoyle extension fund. The annals for 1946 referred to the payment as follows:
- It is also arranged to give ... one shilling per week, per pupil towards the Building Fund to enable Managers of Industrial Schools to effect improvements in the establishments. This Grant will be a help. It is hoped that it may be increased later.
- 9.316** At least £13,600 was paid by the school into the Building Fund, including £2,000 as late as February 1966. It is not known how much of this sum or the rest of the monies in the Fund were used for the purposes of effecting improvements in Tralee or for the benefit of the pupils there.

²⁶ The annals refer to 'this tax' ceasing to be paid when Br Dareau came as Resident Manager.

Dealings on the farm

9.317 The annals disclosed certain irregularities that took place on the farm in relation to the disposal of produce and the 'irregular use' of income, which occurred during a period of severe deprivation for the boys. The annals report that the farm 'appears to have been run on the lines of a Limited Company – between the Brother-in-Charge thereof, [a local businessman and a workman] – but with the liability on the Monastery'.

9.318 The annals go on to report that:

- In November 1950, about half of the livestock, valued at about £1,000, housed on the farm, belonged to [a local business man and a workman], from whom only £566 was received for them.
- 'When a beast was killed neither the cutlets nor the offals was cooked for the boys. These portions appear to have been taken by the butcher and the plates (of beef) or the boney inferior parts of another beast (presumably the butcher's) substituted. Even the first fruits of the vegetable garden were sold or rather given free at the butchers (greengrocers) shop while the boys could not be supplied'.
- The income on the vegetables for the six months ending 31st December 1949 was almost £53. The income for the six months ending 31st December 1950 was £200, which was spent on potatoes, which should have been retained, making the real income 'nil'. The income for the six months to 31st December 1951, immediately after the Superior Resident Manager took control, was over £700.
- Monies were recovered, following the threat of legal proceedings.
- About one-third of the money taken in the sale of vegetables went to the boys. The farmyard was a 'semi-hucksters shop' and the boys were unable to weigh the potatoes and 'gave bargains for a "tip"'. This state of affairs was being continued under two farm Brothers, until the Superior was compelled to intervene and have the second Brother removed, the first having already sought a change 'before the improper transactions were known'.
- The Superior felt that it was an understatement to say that hundreds of pounds were lost over a period of three to four years, and wondered whether it could be counted in thousands. He noted that the boys were under-fed and denied vegetables whilst, at the same time, vegetables were on sale in the market and shops.
- The medical officer had noted that the vegetables were obtainable in town, but the boys could not get any.

9.319 The Visitation Report for 1951 refers to a want of agreement on the question of running the farm. The Report noted:

It would appear that Br Christien's predecessor on the farm was allowed a great deal of freedom in the handling of money and in the buying and selling of stock etc. There also appeared to be a lot of uncontrolled selling of vegetables both by boys and employees on the farm nor was there any proper check on the man that brought vegetables to the market or delivered them to various customers in the town. There was undoubtedly great need for a tightening up of these matters.

9.320 At the Visitor's suggestion, a procedure was agreed between the Resident Manager, the bursar and the farm Brother that would rectify these matters. This plan did not work out as well as anticipated, but the farm Brother's removal enabled the Resident Manager and the bursar to get proper control of the farm finances.

Physical care: food

- 9.321** Some complainants who gave evidence to the Committee said that the food in Tralee was very bad, both in terms of quality and quantity. The 1940s was a period of food shortages everywhere, and Tralee would have had some difficulty in meeting all the dietary requirements of the boys, although it had the advantage of a farm that could have provided fresh vegetables and meat, and it had a bakery that provided all the bread consumed by the boys.
- 9.322** In this regard, the Resident Manager's comments in the early 1950s regarding dealings on the farm and the disposal of produce were of particular interest. The Resident Manager felt that it was an understatement to say that hundreds of pounds were lost over a period of three to four years, and wondered whether it could be counted in thousands. He noted that the boys were underfed, and were denied vegetables whilst at the same time vegetables were on sale in the market and shops. According to the annals, the Medical Officer had noted that the vegetables were obtainable in town but the boys could not get any. The level of deprivation emerged in the evidence heard by the Committee: two of the boys who were in the school in the 1940s spoke of taking food prepared for the pigs.
- 9.323** As was confirmed by one complainant, the situation improved in the mid-1950s with the appointment of a new Brother to the kitchens, Br Lafayette, and the Visitors and Department of Education Inspector were generally satisfied with the quantity of food provided.²⁷ As the Committee has seen in other institutions, the Inspector who visited industrial schools in the 1940s and 1950s was not slow to criticise the diet if she felt that the food was inadequate. Similarly, the Visitation Reports have also commented on inadequate food when they found standards were low. For example, the 1953 Visitation Report recorded complaints by Br Kalle and Br Montaine that the boys were not getting enough to eat. The Resident Manager denied this was so.
- 9.324** Br Lisle, who was in charge of the kitchen in the mid to late 1960s, told the Committee that he did not get a budget for the kitchen, and he had to make the best of what he got. He did not order what came in, but instead he cooked whatever food was there.
- 9.325** The lack of proper cooking facilities was criticised in the 1940s and into the 1950s. In the mid-1950s the Visitor referred to the kitchen Brother succeeding in feeding the boys 'very well' despite 'wretchedly poor facilities in his kitchen'.²⁸
- 9.326** It was not until 1957 that the Visitor recorded any improvement. Even after that date, the dining room and kitchen equipment were identified as inadequate.
- 9.327** Complainants who appeared before the Committee spoke of eating food from the farm to stave off hunger. This was alleged by former residents who were in the Institution throughout the period under investigation.
- 9.328** Two witnesses said the food that they got during Christmas was good.

Physical care: the boys' clothing

- 9.329** The state of the boys' clothing varied greatly between 1940 and 1970. The poor quality of clothing was criticised by the Department of Education Inspector throughout most of the 1940s.²⁹

²⁷ This is borne out by the Department Inspector's Reports, which until 1950 categorised the food and diet as 'satisfactory'. The 1953 Report said that food and diet was 'much improved' and, from then on, was always described by this inspector as very good.

²⁸ A later Visitation Report noted that there was no evidence of the pilfering of food that had taken place before this Brother arrived in Tralee.

²⁹ The 1940s Visitation Reports only commented on the standard of the boys' clothing in 1940, 1941 and 1943, and then only in positive terms.

- 9.330** It was not until 1954 that the Inspector described the standard of clothing as 'v. good'. She noted that the quality had improved and that there were no patches. That year the Visitor reported that the boys were 'especially well clothed' and 'appeared neat, tidy and clean'.
- 9.331** The clothing continued to improve in 1955, 1956 and 1957 and was reported by the Inspector as being either good or very good until 1963. However, by 1964 the Visitor noted that many boys were poorly dressed and wearing torn clothes. He noted two boys were left in charge of the laundry and 'it seems to be a wholetime job'.
- 9.332** In 1968 the Visitor recommended that a woman should be employed to oversee the laundry, and that worn-out clothes should be disposed of and replaced.
- 9.333** The Christian Brothers were paid to make proper provision for food and clothing. They were two of the items covered by the capitation grant. In addition, the addendum to the 1961 Visitation Report indicated that Tralee was financially viable at that time. Despite this fact, it seems clear from the documentation and the oral evidence that food and clothing were not adequate in Tralee for substantial periods between 1940 and 1969.
- 9.334** Food and clothing improved in the mid-1950s, not because of significantly improved finances but because of the appointment of Br Sauvillie as Resident Manager. A Visitor to Tralee in the early 1950s remarked on his 'unsparing efforts' to improve the welfare and material well-being of the boys. The quality of care improved with better management of the Institution.

Physical care: accommodation and facilities

- 9.335** Over the years, the quality of the accommodation and facilities varied greatly, depending on the Resident Manager at the time.
- 9.336** The 1937 Visitation Report described the School as being in an appalling state. The Visitor wrote:
- The parts of the Institution inhabited by the boys is very badly kept. The dining room has been painted within the past month and looks now fairly well, but the table cloths on the dining table are a positive disgrace. They are torn and in a filthy condition – wet and dirty. The tin and aluminium mugs are only fit for the scrapheap, and it is a shame for the Superior to have them seem about. The knives, spoons and all things pertaining to the meals are in a very bad condition. New sets of table linen, delph, knives, spoons, plates etc. are badly needed. The bed linen is also in a dirty condition, and fleas abound. Old rags, old jerseys and discarded stockings are under the mattresses, and some of the Wire mattresses are broken. The boys Lavatories are dirty and the tiles in the boys' bath room are broken and missing. Some parts of the bath room also requires painting. Mr Whelan reports very adversely on all these at his last inspection, and since then little has been done. All these have been again pointed out to the Superior and he has been instructed to have all put into order without delay. A detailed copy of all has been left with him. The Institution is no credit to the Congregation.
- 9.337** A new Resident Manager was appointed in the late 1930s, and the Visitor recorded a month after his appointment that:
- this school suffered in reputation with Govt Inspectors and with the public. The boys were badly clothed, the standard of cleanliness was low and the food especially the dinner of the boys was poor. The name of the Scho did not stand high in Tralee and district and this militated against the influx of boys to the school. The new Superior, Br Dareau has done wonders in the short time he is here to improve the clothing, food and training of the boys and to raise the standard of cleanliness.

- 9.338** The Department Inspector recorded in 1939 that a lot of improvements and redecoration were being done in the school and that it was in a 'progressing state and promises to be very satisfactory'. The dormitories and refectory had been painted, and both appeared clean and well kept. She also recorded that the Resident Manager appeared to be 'very capable and progressive'.
- 9.339** In 1941, the Visitor commented on the improvement. He stated that the Resident Manager had:
done a great deal to improve the buildings. Every part of the establishment is now clean and orderly and in good repair. Plans are being prepared for reconstruction and alterations so as to provide a domestic chapel for the Community and School, a Sanitary annexe for the Community, and additional washing facilities and lavatories in the Boys' dormitories.
- 9.340** During the 1940s, the reports of both the Department of Education Inspector and the Visitors found things largely satisfactory. Apart from the completion of a chapel in the early 1940s, no major construction work was carried out in Tralee, although renovations and maintenance were carried out from time to time. One Visitor described the basic premises, which had been constructed in 1859, as 'naturally dark and cheerless'. The main building was a typical Victorian institutional structure.
- 9.341** Throughout the 1950s, improvements were made to the dormitories, the refectory, the chapel and the boys' kitchen. The Resident Manager in the early 1950s, Br Sauville, was active in improving the buildings and facilities, and was praised by the Department's Inspector for his efforts in this regard.³⁰
- 9.342** By 1968, the Visitor had commented on the general neglect in the upkeep of the premises. The boys themselves were doing the general cleaning work under the supervision of a Brother, while workmen did the general maintenance work.
- 9.343** What might have been deemed adequate in the 1940s and 1950s was less so in the 1960s. The new Resident Manager in the early 1960s, Br Sinclair, was less competent than the man who had effected such improvement in the 1950s. Although the School continued to be described as well-run, basic facilities, in particular toilets and washrooms, were singled out for criticism.
- 9.344** From the 1960s, however, strong criticism was made of the condition of the schoolrooms. They were described as 'very drab and dirty' in 1960 and, in 1963, were described as being 'very badly in need of repair – the atmosphere is depressing'.
- 9.345** The Department of Education Inspector, Dr C. E. Lysaght, who inspected the School in March 1966, found that the dormitories 'gave an impression of the bleakness of an old style institution'. He also referred to a 'general drabness' and went on to state:
I have reservations however that increased money made available would solve all problems here and bring it up to the standard of the schools operated by nuns which I have seen so far.
- 9.346** In 1967, the Visitor recommended the renewal and re-planning of the boys' toilets, because they were in 'a bad state'.
- 9.347** In May 1968, the Visitor commented that the infirmary department was 'one of the bright lights of an otherwise most depressing establishment'. The house, although somewhat drab and in need of painting and many modern improvements, was 'reasonably satisfactory'. There were still no facilities for the boys to wash themselves during the day. It noted that the toilets were clean but

³⁰ 'The School has improved out of all recognition' and 'excellent manager'.

'primitive in the extreme'. The premises had been neglected, and the Resident Manager of the time was blamed for this deterioration.

9.348 Just before the School closed, things had improved somewhat. The Visitation Report for April 1969 noted that one of the dormitories had been fitted out as a study hall, and that two other rooms had been set up as television and recreation rooms. One dormitory catered for all boys and this had been painted, remodelled and looked very presentable. The shower room had cubicles fitted and was working very satisfactorily.

- 9.349**
- **The negative impact of bad Resident Managers was clearly seen in Tralee, not only in terms of the physical care of the boys, but in every aspect of life there.**
 - **The quality of the food improved in the 1950s with the improvements in the kitchen and the arrival of Br Lafayette.**
 - **The Christian Brothers' Opening Statement mentioned that Visitation Reports gave the impression that clothing and footwear were generally satisfactory but, in fact, there were numerous Inspector's Reports indicating that clothing was below standard.**
 - **Boys should not have gone hungry whilst produce from the farm was sold for private profit. This situation continued for a number of years before being stopped by a newly appointed Resident Manager.**

Health of the boys

9.350 The Department of Education inspections almost invariably referred to the health of the boys in positive terms. Only on one occasion, in 1944, did the Inspector comment on the fact that 'In this school numbers of children much below average height and weight for age. Many of the children under weight'. In spite of this observation, the Inspector also noted that the children were medically well cared for. Eighteen months later, the Inspector noted that the 'Boys look healthy and have put on weight regularly' and that the children were medically 'well cared'. Throughout the period, the Inspector described the boys as being 'well cared' or 'very well cared' and her description of their health varied from 'satisfactory' to 'excellent'. The documentation also refers to the doctor attending regularly and as required. However, two complainants made allegations of the failure to treat them medically for specific conditions, and one in particular said that he had only seen a doctor once during his six years in Tralee. Neither of these complainants was in Tralee in the 1950s when conditions appear to have improved.

Education

9.351 The children committed to an industrial school were entitled to a full primary education and an industrial training to equip them for employment when they left. A full primary education could be measured by the attainment of a Primary Certificate at the end of the national school cycle. The Christian Brothers maintain that the statistics show that the pass rate for those pupils who were present for the Primary Certificate examination was good, averaging 76%.

9.352 The Committee has Primary Certificate records for 10 of the 15 complainants heard. Of the 10, eight passed and two failed.

Visitation Reports

9.353 Visitors' comments on the standard of education in Tralee were generally positive. For example, in 1941, the Visitor noted that the Department Inspector had given a 'very flattering report on the vast improvement which he stated was discernible in the manners appearance and proficiency of the pupils'. In 1944, the Visitor noted that the boys could 'give a good account of the instruction they have received'. The following year, the Visitor noted that they were 'making satisfactory progress in all classes but the standard of proficiency is not as high as in the ordinary schools'.

9.354 In both 1954 and 1963, the Visitor noted that the frequent changes of staff had had an adverse effect on the standards. By contrast, in 1958 the Visitor said that quite a good standard was reached by the boys. Although the 'uneven' standard was mentioned in 1954, 1960 and 1961, the Visitor in 1960 noted that most of the boys had 'the essentials'. The large numbers of weak pupils were mentioned in the 1964 and 1968 Reports and, in 1968, the Visitor noted that many of the boys needed individual help, which they were being given 'as well as possible'.

Department of Education Inspections

9.355 Only two Department of Education reports were available to the Committee. In 1942, the level of education in most subjects was stated to be pitched at a lower standard than the official standard. In 1952, the school was reported to be 'satisfactory'.

Br Marceau

9.356 Witnesses who were taught by Br Marceau confirmed his brutality and eccentricity, which had been commented on by Visitors.

9.357 Br Aribert, who was in the School in the early 1960s, told the Committee he disagreed with Br Marceau's teaching methods. He had charts '*all over the walls*' and he made the boys go around learning them. He felt that the boys did not like this system.

9.358 Because Br Marceau was not trained, he was not subject to normal Department of Education Inspections, and therefore there was no control or supervision exercised by the Department over his activities.

Oral evidence

9.359 Eight complainants spoke about the standard of education they got in Tralee. Three of these had very positive comments to make. The first of these witnesses said that his time in Tralee gave him a broader outlook. He emerged '*appreciating some of even the finer things in life in the line of music and literature and that kind of stuff*'. He said that the practical education, the Maths, English and the Irish (apart from Br Archard) stood him in good stead.³¹

9.360 Another witness told the Committee he received an education from the Christian Brothers. He was educated in the three Rs and had the opportunity to go to secondary school but turned it down and went to the technical school instead. He had been an '*awful mitcher*' before he went to Tralee. He acknowledged that he was better off in Tralee and would not have got an education otherwise.

9.361 A third complainant who was sent to the technical college for an extra year's education said he received a '*good education*'. He also said that you could learn music in the band if you wanted to, although he personally did not pursue this. He thought there were two more boys who attended the tech with him.

9.362 By contrast, three complainants were very critical of the education received.

9.363 One complainant, who was in Tralee in the 1940s, said that he received a '*very bad education, really bad*'. He reflected that it was perhaps his own fault, as he could not take things in. He recalled how the nuns taught him how to read and write. In Tralee, the emphasis was not on his education but rather on his work on the farm and in the laundry. His arithmetic was '*right up the creek really*'. He could read but he could not spell. When asked to what extent his education developed while in Tralee, he replied '*very, very bad, very bad*'.

³¹ This complainant was in Tralee from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s.

9.364 Another complainant recalled that, because he was working on the farm, he received education only when the weather was inclement. He thinks he was about eight years of age when he was sent to work on the farm. He also said that the education he got in Tralee was not better than what he would otherwise have received. He said he went to school *'the odd time'*. He did, however, recall Br Kalle as being a good teacher.

9.365 The third witness, who was in Tralee from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, said, *'I can't remember any education. It was terrible because of the climate of fear; I was so frightened all the time'*. He was able to read and write when he left Tralee but *'not too well'*. He did learn how to read music while in Tralee. Apart from that, he said, he came out of Tralee with *'no education'*.

9.366 Two further complainants were ambivalent about the education they received, although in both cases it would appear to have been reasonably good. The first of these was in Tralee in the 1940s and he recalled that he passed the Primary Certificate. He thought that the whole class had sat it, but learned that only two boys in his class had done so. He believed that he could have received help during the exam from the Brother who supervised during the exam. The Department of Education Primary Certificate results for the relevant year confirm that only two boys in Tralee sat the examination that year. Three years later, 12 boys sat the examination, and two passed.

9.367 Another complainant, who attended the school in the 1950s, said that the education he received was both *'good and poor'*. He noted that *'education in Ireland at that time actually was non-existent'*. Education, he believed:

would prepare you for when you leave the School, but it didn't actually enhance my situation because when I left the School I still needed help to further my education and there was no actual aftercare.

9.368 His writing and spelling, he said, was weak. When he went into Tralee he was *'okay, well reasonable'* educationally. He failed a lot of exams and said that it may have been his own fault. He was not a quick learner. This complainant later joined the Irish Army, where he failed every one of his exams. He believed that Tralee had a bearing on that. Even though his records show that he had passed the Primary Certificate, he believed he had only completed 5th class when he left Tralee.

Evidence given by former members of staff

9.369 Six Brothers gave evidence to the Committee about the education given to the boys. One spoke about the high standard of the education and another recalled the excellent Primary Certificate results. A third told the Committee of the commitment to quality that they had. A fourth spoke about the lack of teaching aids, and a fifth referred to the background of the children as mitigating against a high standard. A sixth Brother spoke about how the boys were all in the same class, regardless of ability. He told the Committee how this was different to Artane, where they were streamed. None of the Brothers referred to the poor quality of the classrooms that was identified by successive Visitors in the 1960s.

9.370 • **The standard of education in Tralee was better than in some other industrial schools. The smaller numbers, and two genuinely interested Resident Managers during the 1950s, led to improved standards, a fact borne out by some of the complainants.**

Second level education

9.371 According to their Opening Statement, the earliest record the Christian Brothers have of a pupil receiving second level education was an account from a Brother who taught in the school in the 1940s. He said that, towards the end of his time there, some of the pupils went to the Green Secondary School in Tralee, which was also run by the Christian Brothers. There was a record of

one other pupil achieving his Intermediate and Leaving Certificates in the 1950s. It was not until the 1960s that boys were sent to secondary school from Tralee on a consistent basis, although the local secondary school was owned and operated by the Christian Brothers.

9.372 One of the items on the agenda for the meeting of the Christian Brothers' Resident Managers' Association, held on 31st April 1957, was whether 'anything extra' could be done for industrial school pupils of outstanding ability when they reached the age of 16 years. The minutes recorded the following:

The number of pupils of "outstanding ability" is apparently very small. The Department, as intimated through its Inspector Mr Sugrue, is very interested in the progress of those boys who are attending a Secondary School in Glin, and gives a maintenance grant for an extra year for them. Br L. Hourigan said there was no trouble in having boys admitted to the Army School of Music. The experiment was not a success in Tralee – boys sent to attend the Brothers' Sec. School proved unsatisfactory.

9.373 It is not clear in what respect this was 'unsatisfactory', as very few boys had attended secondary school by 1957. In 1963, the Visitor stated:

Boys who have gone on to the Secondary School at St. Mary's are doing very well – two of them have the priesthood in mind – and about nine boys follow a course in Woodwork and are taught by a member of the Technical School staff.

9.374 Only four of the complainants heard by the Committee had attended secondary/technical school.

Manual instruction classes

9.375 In July 1943, the Resident Manager wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Education, asking that the boys in the primary school should be allowed to attend classes in woodwork and manual training in the local technical college as part of their school week. An hour and a half or two hours a week was proposed. This proposal was accepted by the Department of Education, but was not implemented because of staff changes in Tralee and, accordingly, the scheme was abandoned.

9.376 The 1945 Visitation Report stated:

The Manual Instruction classes were discontinued some years ago, and none of the boys now get instruction in Woodwork except the few who are engaged at carpentry. It is to be feared that the interest of the boys was not considered when this change was made, as there is no class of boys who would benefit more than these from Manual Instruction, which should form an essential part of their education.

9.377 In January 1950, the Resident Manager notified the Department of Education of his intention to set up a class in Manual Instruction – Woodwork. Correspondence ensued regarding the syllabus, qualification of the teachers, etc. Approval was granted and the class started in September 1950. The Inspector's reports on Manual Instruction in primary schools for 1951, 1952 and 1953 reported the instruction to be excellent.

9.378 In 1954, the Resident Manager sought recognition for the course from the Department for the purposes of a grant.

9.379 An internal Departmental memorandum dated 1st November 1954 set out the reasons why the Resident Manager sought recognition from the Department for the course. One of these reasons was that, as a result of following a two-year course, the students were in a position to qualify for the Group Certificate, a qualification that the trade unions accepted. The Department employee noted that the Resident Manager was a Manager 'who has the best interests of his special

students at heart and who strives to accomplish for them whatever is to their benefit'. The author recommended that the Department recognise the course.

9.380 Another internal Departmental memorandum noted that the Manager put great confidence in the boys under his care, and the Inspector said that it would be worthwhile recognising the course. A decision was made that the Inspector's recommendation be accepted.

9.381 • **The enthusiasm of the Resident Manager for this project is striking. It is an example of an individual Christian Brother looking to the best interests of the boys and offering innovative ideas. It is further evidence that a good and committed Resident Manager could make changes that benefited both the school and the boys.**

Training

9.382 As in all of the industrial schools examined by the Committee, the trades offered to the boys in Tralee were largely dictated by the needs of the Institution. They never varied throughout the period of the investigation and consisted of shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry, baking and kitchen work, laundry and farm work. In the 1960s, the demands being put on the one or two boys who ran the laundry for the School was commented on by Visitors, one of whom recommended that a woman should be employed to assist with this work.

9.383 Up to a half of the total of boys in trade were engaged in farm work. In 1960, a two-hour per week agricultural training course was established. Boys were readily employable as farm workers after they left, although at very low wages. The Christian Brothers admitted that many farmers were only prepared to take the boys until they became entitled to an adult wage, at which time they let them go. Whilst working as juveniles, they had their board and keep deducted, which left them with a bare pittance. Although there was undoubtedly an element of exploitation, there was, according to Br Nolan, at least the prospect of a job that was hard to come by in rural Ireland at that time.

9.384 Trades such as farming, carpentry, tailoring, boot-making and baking all directly contributed to the Institution. Clothing was made and repaired on the premises, and boots were repaired. In addition, in the 1947 Visitation Report it was stated that the tailors and shoemakers had a steadily growing clientele. There were about four older boys permanently in each shop. After school hours the number was raised to 16. The Committee does not have complete records, but the 1953 Visitation Report stated that income exceeded expenditure for the carpenters, tailors and boot-makers. The figures do not include the value of what was supplied to the Brothers or boys.

9.385 The carpenter's shop was the most popular trade for the boys. According to the Christian Brothers' Opening Statement, there were two excellent carpenters in Tralee. They carried out most of the renovations and innovations that were completed between 1940 and 1970 with the assistance of the boys. The men who taught the carpentry made the new chapel.³² They helped to build the handball alley and did a lot of renovation work. The furniture they made was sold in the nearby towns and was valued for the quality of the workmanship. It was recorded in 1937, 1951 and 1953 as having an income exceeding expenditure.³³

9.386 Of the 431 boys who were discharged into trades between 1940 and 1969, 151 went into farming, and 112 went into service as a 'houseboy'. Only 23 went into carpentry, and 20 into tailoring, 51 worked in hotels, and 24 worked as boot-makers.

³² One complainant told the Committee about how the boys had to creosote the floor in hot weather, and without any gloves or goggles. *'It was a very nasty job because it would get into your eyes and all over your hands and everywhere else'.*

³³ There was a profit of £98 mentioned in the 1937 Visitation Report, and a profit of approximately £395 mentioned in the 1953 Visitation Report.

- 9.387** • **Only trades of direct benefit to the school were offered and those that were provided, with the exception of farming, offered very limited employment opportunities. As the years went by, the trades became more and more irrelevant and outdated, but no changes were made to reflect this fact. Boys were prepared for a lifetime of labouring and menial tasks.**

Aftercare

9.388 The Christian Brothers argued that the Resident Managers were left to deal with the matter of aftercare on a zero budget, with no resources, no transport and no relief from the existing burden of the work to be done in the school. It acknowledged that the result was that the 'Aftercare Programme was unsatisfactory, and very much a hit and miss affair'.

9.389 In Tralee, contact with former residents and their employers was mainly by post. A letter was written to the employers, who effectively evaluated themselves. It was obviously ineffective as an assessment of the progress of the boy. This also meant that the boy was not in a position to communicate his situation to the Resident Manager. The Opening Statement explained that, in the early 1960s, a printed form was sent to employers once a year. No equivalent contact was made with the boys, however. In the Committee's view, this was a substantial failing in the system.

9.390 According to the Christian Brothers, many of the boys emigrated soon after leaving Tralee, which impeded the implementation of a satisfactory aftercare programme for them.

9.391 In 1965, the Visitor said:

The after care of the boys cannot be termed satisfactory. A number of boys go out to farmers but after a few years make their way to England. Some farmers keep them till they are 19 years of age and then let them off as they would be obliged to pay them a man's wage.

9.392 In the follow-up letter to the Resident Manager, he was asked to give as much attention as possible to the aftercare of the boys.

9.393 Four of the 15 complainants heard by the Committee were followed up for the prescribed period of two years, according to the Register. Two of these complainants left the School in the 1940s, one in the early 1950s, and one in the late 1950s. There was no two-year follow-up for another nine of them, and follow-up was not applicable in respect of two boys as they did not go into employment on leaving Tralee.

- 9.394** • **Aftercare was inadequate, as was acknowledged by the Congregation.**

Emotional abuse

9.395 In its Submission on St Joseph's, Tralee, the Congregation wrote:

The philosophy of care in industrial schools was one of physical care and emphasis was placed on hygiene, order, neatness, discipline and physical education.

9.396 It also emphasised that 'the use of corporal punishment was accepted in both home and school and certain aspects of diet, clothing, heating and furnishing were different from our present standards'.

9.397 Throughout the relevant period, Tralee had Brothers who were unduly severe and harsh with the boys. Where physical punishment is perpetrated arbitrarily and excessively, a climate of fear builds

up which can impact on every aspect of life in the institution. The boys lived in fear, and many complainants spoke of this undercurrent of fear in their everyday life in Tralee.

9.398 Added to this climate of fear was the bullying by older boys of younger boys. It was a feature in this Institution. It was not properly addressed, either because of a shortage of staff engaged in a supervisory capacity or because of a failure to understand the seriousness of the problem. This increased the sense of insecurity and fear for the majority of children growing up there.

9.399 Tralee also had one acknowledged sexual abuser on the staff for a period of 20 years. Fear of speaking out, and lack of confidence in the willingness of Brothers to listen to them and protect them, left the children particularly vulnerable to sexual predators. The fact that this Brother could operate a bizarre ritual of bathing boys and being bathed personally by them leaves no doubt that the boys in Tralee were not adequately protected by the system and complaints were not properly dealt with.

9.400 The physical care that was provided was at best a minimum standard. The children were not well fed and were not dressed properly for a significant part of the period under review. The buildings were cold and drab and badly maintained, and there appeared to be very little in the way of recreation for the children. Indeed, when writing closing comments about Tralee in the annals, the final Resident Manager, Br Roy, commented that *'recreation facilities hardly existed'*.³⁴

9.401 Tralee did not present a particularly edifying picture, but even with all of these shortcomings, it could still have offered a measure of comfort and security to the children, as was shown when one Resident Manager took an interest in the needs and welfare of the boys. When the atmosphere was right, the Brothers and boys could interact in a positive and supportive way.

Oral evidence

9.402 Both complainants and former members of staff gave evidence as to the nature of the relations between the boys and the Brothers. Complainants spoke of instances of gratuitous cruelty that indicated a generally negative attitude towards the boys on the part of the Brothers.

9.403 One complainant, who was in the school in the 1940s, described how he was treated by the Brothers:

There was no such thing as being good to you, there was no such thing as being good to you. You were there, you were just there to be worked and looked after. I couldn't say I ever had a kind word from a Brother.

9.404 Another complainant told the Committee that he wet the bed until he was almost 16 and he got *'some atrocious abuse over that'*. He spoke of how the Brothers, but mostly one particular Brother, Br Ansel, would hold up the sheet after he wet the bed and show it to the rest of the School, mocking him. This led to him being labelled a bed-wetter by the other boys. This was, at the time, *'the lowest you could be'*.

9.405 Another former resident said that you never went to a Brother and told him your problem. He was being severely abused by Br Marceau, who was well known to the Congregation for his excessive punishment of boys in his care, but he could not speak to the Brothers about it because he did not know if he would be believed. If he was not believed, he could get a *'hiding'* from the Brother he told. Then Br Marceau would be told and he would get a *'worse hiding'* from him for telling lies. *'That's the way it was, you didn't go to a Christian Brother because you didn't expect any help from him'*.

³⁴ According to the Opening Statement, the main recreational facilities were the hall, schoolyard, football playing pitch and the band room. When the primary school closed, the classrooms were converted into sitting rooms, with TV etc.

- 9.406** He also said that, if two boys had an argument, the Brothers would put them into a boxing ring and *'let them settle it that way'*, regardless of whether one boy was older than the other. Br Bevis confirmed that boxing matches were organised, although he maintained that boys of unequal size were not pitted against each other.
- 9.407** A fourth complainant, who worked in the laundry, recounted what occurred when smaller boys were brought to the laundry with wet sheets from their beds. He said:
- Yes, I can remember it quite vividly. Any of the boys – it depended on who the Brother was. They would parade the boy with his sheets in his hands, his wet sheets, the sheets he wetted in, and this little boy would be woken up there. As I said, I was between 14 and 15, I was old enough to get a job there, and I was able to see who is able to come in the door. Quite often the boys would walk in and the Brother would follow to humiliate the boy with his wet sheets, all the other children would follow the Christian Brother laid on to humiliate this little boy there. They would all be giggling, like kind of kids would be doing, giggling there, not understanding what the nature of that was. Here is this little boy there, standing with his wet sheets and he's terrified. The Brother would turn around and say "right, ... he has wet his sheets, you have now got to wash his sheets. Now there's the belt, give it to him so he won't do it again". To look at that little boy's eyes, to look at that little boy's eyes ... I wouldn't punish him, the boy was too frightened. I understood what he was going through because I was frightened that way so often. If I didn't flog that little boy I got the flogging.*
- 9.408** This complainant recalled that, on the day of his departure from Tralee, two Brothers stood at the gate and told him he was going to a job in Co Cork. When he asked them whether they knew where his mother was, they *'kind of sniggered'* and told him that his mother did not want to know him, that he had been a failure in Tralee and that he would always be a failure.
- 9.409** Another complainant remembered that he was always crying and so was given a nickname by Br Bevis. The Brothers and the boys referred to him by that name throughout his entire time in Tralee until he was 16. He was beaten on a regular basis, mostly for crying. Older boys picked on him and it was humiliating. Br Bevis laughed at him while calling him this name. Br Bevis did not remember a boy with that nickname but admitted that it was possible he could have called him that name. Br Bevis apologised if it caused him any hurt, but he denied being complicit in the taunts.
- 9.410** The witness also explained how he had been put into the small dormitory and that the boys who were put into this small dormitory were perceived as *'pets'*, i.e. the Brothers' favourites:
- Being the pets you were really the worst treated because the other boys used to hate you. They used to think that you were spoiled and you were telling them information and things like that. So both ways you were caught like, you know.*
- 9.411** One ex-Brother, Professor Tom Dunne, who left the Congregation after seven years and has written articles on his experience of being a Christian Brother, spent a short period in Tralee doing holiday relief work in 1963. He said in one of these articles that he had been shocked, while watching *'States of Fear'*, by the testimony of one man who claimed to have suffered appalling abuse whilst in Tralee. Professor Dunne said that he had spent several weeks on relief duty there in the summer of 1963, but had subsequently suppressed all memory of that time. He told the Committee he believed that he had psychologically wiped the memories of his time there from his mind because it was such a distressing experience.
- 9.412** He said in evidence that his memory of Tralee related mainly to the demeanour of the boys. He said that he did not beat any of the boys when he was there but, not knowing the culture that was there, he talked to them. He said that the culture in Tralee was *'essentially you didn't talk to them*

on an individual basis because that would encourage them to – that was too soft and I was going in very soft on lots of levels’.

9.413 Professor Dunne went on to identify what particularly bothered him about the boys in Tralee. He said that *‘they were pathetically grateful and almost tried to form some kind of ... bond with you’*. He said that the boys in Tralee were *‘very ... surprised to be talked to in a way that wasn’t simply authoritarian and they were almost pathetic in their response. I think it affected me a lot. That I remember’*.

9.414 He went on to say that he recalled it as a place where he intensely disliked the way the boys were talked about by the staff. He added, *‘I think there was a sense of them, you know, as being just simply a problem. I remember it as harsh in its general atmosphere’*.

9.415 He said that he had no specific memories of Tralee and was not a reliable witness as to what it was actually like for individual boys there. He explained:

The memory is simply of atmosphere and what it was like to interact with the boys ... I suppose they lived in a certain kind of fear of authority that was far in excess of what I was used to in schools.

9.416 In his article published in the *Dublin Review*, Professor Dunne was even more explicit:

At this remove, I can only recall that it was a profoundly upsetting experience, not because I was witness to any particular horror, but because of the atmosphere of meanness, bleakness and fear. This was a different world from the excellent school less than a mile away ... and even more from our comfortable, normal life in community ... My clearest memory is of embarrassment at the harsh demeanour of staff and the cowed servility of the boys, so overwhelmingly grateful for any hint of kindness. Perhaps I put it out of my mind as soon as I could because of the overwhelming sense of human misery and my own inadequacy in the face of it ... It was a secret, enclosed world, run on fear: the boys were wholly at the mercy of the staff, who seemed to have entirely negative views of them.

9.417 Professor Dunne went on to say in the article that the Brothers ‘often left the far more needy boys of their industrial schools to the inadequate or the troubled, who were given no special training and little supervision’.

9.418 This disturbing view of Tralee was partially echoed by Br Mahieu. He stated that, when he first went to Tralee in the early 1960s, he noticed that the children *‘seemed to be crying out for a bit of love and a bit of attention and a bit of care’*. He said that he felt sorry for the boys. They were a nice, decent bunch and seemed reasonably happy.

9.419 During Br Mahieu’s time, small but significant improvements to the quality of life of the boys in Tralee were introduced: a tape-recorder for music was acquired, and a projector was donated for the showing of a weekly film. There were books, comics and magazines available to the boys in the dormitory.

9.420 He said that, when he went out into the yard, 20 or 30 of the boys would immediately surround him and ‘link out’ of him. Looking back on it now, he would say that this linking was possibly a sign of emotional instability. He thought that they *‘needed somebody’*, *‘they wanted somebody to cling on to’*.

9.421 Br Aribert, whilst accepting only that one of the Brothers was maybe harsh *‘on occasions’* towards the boys, also identified a loneliness in them. He did not know if the emotional needs of the boys were adequately catered for. He said that, whenever he or any Brother was on yard duty, the

boys came and linked with them (three or four on each side of the Brother) and he felt it meant a lot to them, *'that at least they had someone literally to hang on to'*. He felt that there was an element of the boys feeling rejection and loneliness, even though they did not say so in so many words.

9.422 Whilst these three Brothers were clearly identifying an emotional need in the children in Tralee, they were not able to say what might have been done to offer a greater degree of comfort to the boys there. The witnesses who spoke to the Committee were quite clear that it was not possible to report or complain to any other Brother about mistreatment or abuse.

9.423 Other Brothers who were in Tralee did not identify emotional deprivation in the boys there. One Brother who was in the School in the mid to late 1940s stated that, as far as he knew, the Brothers and the boys got on well. He did not know if the boys were afraid of the Brothers but said that they had more respect for the Principal than the rest, as he had power.

9.424 Another Brother, Br Boyce, who had also worked in Artane, said that Tralee was more relaxed than Artane, for both the Brothers and the boys. He said that the small numbers there meant that they could deal with the boys easily. He was able to talk to the boys more easily. The boys were the same kind as in Artane, although he thought the boys were more relaxed in Tralee. He felt that the boys were helped, i.e. emotionally supported, by the smaller numbers in the School.

9.425 Br Bevis said that he did not think that there were many boys who found it difficult to cope. He accepted that they had their own fears and that there were tears for being rejected by their parents, tears of loneliness and tears from probably being taunted by the other boys, but they could tell *'most of the Brothers'*. For his own part, he said that boys would come to him and tell him that someone was bullying them or jeering at them. He did not accept that the atmosphere was cold and indifferent to their plight. He said the boys could complain to the Brothers about excessive corporal punishment being meted out by other Brothers, but accepted that there was no system for making complaints and that no investigations into complaints took place.

9.426 Two Brothers, Brs Aribert and Chapin, stated that they felt that they had a good relationship personally with the boys, and both said that generally the relationship between the Brothers and the boys was very good. Br Aribert referred to the boys needing someone to literally hang onto, and also said that the staff who were there in his time were *'very caring people'*. He mentioned one particular Brother, Br Reve, who was like a father figure.

9.427 Br Octave, in a reply to a Christian Brothers' questionnaire, said that some of the Brothers were very tough on the boys and punished them severely. Others were more equable. He said it was important that all staff established their own discipline.

9.428 Some complainants gave evidence of kindness shown to them by different Brothers. However, one Brother described a failing in the Institution, when he said that the boys became institutionalised. He said that the *'personal touch wasn't there. Well, I suppose from men that is what you would kind of expect ... that the personal touch wasn't really there'*. He also pointed out that, when the boys left the School and *'went out on their own'*, they could not cope. *'They lost the back-up of routine that they were used to'*.

9.429 In 1947 the Visitation Report commented that, while the Resident Manager's *'intercourse with the boys is kindly ... it never sacrifices the distance that inspires respect'*. In 1953 the Visitation Report stressed contact rather than a relationship. It wrote that the Resident Manager's:

main contacts with the boys ... are: Inspection every morning, the Store and distribution of clothing, etc. when necessary, and giving the boys a Religious Instruction on Sundays.

- 9.430** In 1957 the Report remarked on the quality of emotional support. It noted the Brothers were generally 'sympathetic and considerate in their dealings with the boys and hence the Institution does, as far as possible, resemble a home' and there was no attempt to run away.
- 9.431** The relationship between the boys and the Brothers in charge was very rarely described in positive terms by ex-residents of industrial schools, but many Brothers had a different understanding. Even today, some Brothers looking back at their time in schools such as Tralee do not appear to appreciate how the School impacted on the children who were sent there.

Daily workload of the Brothers

- 9.432** The Brothers who appeared before the Investigation Committee spoke of their daily routine and the stresses of working in Tralee. Four of the seven Brothers who worked in Tralee for other than holiday relief spoke about the busy days they had in the School, and one of them spoke about the stress it placed him under. This respondent, Br Mahieu, stated that he had a lot of supervision to do. It was generally the two or three teaching Brothers who organised and took responsibility for the daily activity, the timetables and the routines in the School. He also spoke about the arrival of boys from Glin and Upton in 1966 as causing a difficulty in terms of looking after them and trying to cope with them. He said it caused '*an awful lot of extra vigilance*'. He became less happy with his work there until they had '*got to grips with the situation*'. Other Brothers also spoke about the long hours.
- 9.433** Br Mahieu spoke of the difficulty of dealing with bed-wetters. He had nobody to help him, and trying to cope with it wore him down. The only resource available was an old-fashioned laundry. He acknowledged that he would get frustrated and would use the strap, which he bitterly regretted. He felt he was put into an almost impossible situation. There could be six or eight bed-wetters and soilers in a dormitory.
- 9.434** The 1966 Visitation Report noted that a number of older Brothers resided in Tralee, and advised that every member of staff should be able to take his share of duties and help to lighten the burden of the others, and this was going to be all the more necessary when the boys from Glin arrived. In the circumstances, the Visitor felt Tralee was not a suitable place for the old Brothers. With these older, more infirm Brothers unable to work, the burden of work fell unfairly on the younger Brothers. The evidence of Br Lisle confirmed that in 1966 there were only four Brothers, including himself, available to run the School, out of a total of 11 Brothers in the Community. He pointed out he was not trained as a teacher. Br Mahieu claimed that one of the remaining Brothers, Br Marceau, was not someone to whom supervision duties could be given.
- 9.435** Like those in other Christian Brothers institutions, Brothers in Tralee did not receive any training in childcare. According to the Opening Statement of the Christian Brothers, newcomers had to rely on the example and advice of senior colleagues. They also relied on the support of established routines and procedures. Six of the seven former permanent staff members who gave evidence to the Investigation Committee had all entered the novitiate at 14 or 15, and were no more than 18 years old after completing their first year in St Helen's. All seven were aged between 24 and 28 when they arrived in Tralee. Br Bevis said that he did not believe early entry into the seminary affected his ability to cope with the boys emotionally, but he did concede that he needed more experience and that, if he had the chance to go back, he would do things differently.
- 9.436** Br Mahieu, when referring to the difficulties experienced when the boys from Glin and Upton arrived in Tralee, stated:

Now, that made it extremely difficult for us. Like, when I was sent to Tralee ... I got no training whatsoever, not even one single word. All I was given was, I was given a leather strap. Nobody thought it worthwhile to give me training for residential care.

9.437 He said that they badly needed training when they had the mix of boys from Upton, Glin and Tralee. He was never given any direction in relation to the type of discipline he could administer to the boys, either by the Department of Education or the Christian Brothers. In their Final Submissions, the Christian Brothers said that a review of the entire transcript of this respondent's evidence indicated that these comments were not intended as a criticism of the Congregation but were, with the benefit of hindsight, expressing regret that specialist training was not provided for persons in his position at that time.

9.438 Brothers were not given any induction course or training on arrival in Tralee.

Visitation Reports, Department Inspections and the issue of emotional abuse

9.439 The Visitation Reports invariably described the boys as happy, and no comments were made about any emotional needs. They referred frequently to the good atmosphere in Tralee and the good relations between the boys and the Brothers.

9.440 The 1959 Visitation Report commented that the discipline was 'satisfactory. The boys are at their ease and a spirit of cooperation and good-will prevails'.

9.441 There was little evidence that the Visitors or the Department's Inspectors ever spoke to the boys in the schools.³⁵ These failures to consult with the boys were flaws in both the management of the school and supervision by the Department.

9.442 The Investigation Committee did hear some positive comments from the former pupils who attended oral hearings. Two complainants identified two different Brothers in charge of the farm as being kind and good to the boys.

9.443 One witness said that one of these two Brothers, Br Reve, knew what was going on in Tralee at the time. He was living under the stairs in the School, not in the Brothers' quarters because, according to the witness, he was dirty from farm work and he was regarded by the other Brothers as a '*dirty little man*'. The boys were able to talk to him about being hurt and he always said to them '*There is nothing I can do about it*'.

9.444 Another complainant said he did not mind going to work on the farm as the Brother there, Br Avery, was '*brilliant*' and '*nice to everyone*'. He said that this particular Brother took the shotgun to Br Marceau³⁶ once or twice because of his cruelty to the boys and '*told him to stop it once and for all*'.

9.445 Another former resident, when asked if there was an environment of fear in the School, stated that he was only in fear of one particular Brother, Br Lafayette. He felt the rest of the Brothers did their best with what they had and were getting '*a raw deal*' in the media. He named four individuals, including one lay person, who had been either good or kind to him. These included Brs Bevis and Cheney.³⁷ He said that he had very fond memories of Br Bevis and still exchanged Christmas cards with him.

9.446 • **Professor Dunne said that boys showed extreme gratitude for any act of kindness, which he thought was one of the most disturbing aspects of life in Tralee. Complainant evidence tended to confirm his observation. Even if the kindness shown was no more**

³⁵ The 1949 annals referred to Mr Sugrue, the Department's Inspector, having made his first visit to the School and having spoken freely to staff and boys.

³⁶ This Brother to whom the shotgun was taken was the Brother who had the long history of physically abusing boys and spent two separate periods in Tralee.

³⁷ He also said this of Br Toussaint and of a lay teacher.

than ordinary human respect or consideration, it made an impact on the children who received it, and they remembered it with gratitude some 50 years later.

- Some complainants contrasted the harshness of some Brothers with the kinder treatment by others. Individual Brothers could have an impact on the lives of these children but they were powerless to protect them from the excesses of their colleagues. Although Brothers could not change the system, they could ameliorate its effects through individual acts of kindness.

Contact with the outside world

9.447 An important element in the emotional well-being of children in institutions, which was recognised by the Cussen Report, was their contact with the outside world. For the majority of children in Tralee this was not a significant feature of their time there. It was not until 1968, some 32 years after it was recommended by Justice Cussen, that the primary schooling of the children in Tralee was integrated with that of the children in the town. This was all the more regrettable because the outside schools, both national and secondary, were run by the Christian Brothers, which should have facilitated an easier and speedier transition. Professor Dunne wrote of the isolation of the Industrial School from the other Christian Brothers establishment in Tralee. He said that although 'The Monastery', as the Industrial School was called, was less than a mile away from the school in which he taught, he was only dimly aware of its existence before being assigned to help out there for the summer. He said that the Monastery and the Brothers who staffed it lived apart from the other Brothers who staffed the day school in Tralee town, who enjoyed a 'comfortable, normal life in community'. In 1960 the Visitation Report noted that 'the townspeople are very good to the boys and interested in their welfare – this is especially evident at Christmas time. There is no undue familiarity with outsiders'.

9.448 In 1963 the Visitation Report referred to the School band and dancing troupe rehearsing for the St Patrick's Day concert. The Visitor mentioned that the School had some good friends among the townspeople but remarked, not disapprovingly, that otherwise the Brothers had little or no connection with the town.

9.449 In response to the questionnaire he received, Br Octave, who was in Tralee in the 1940s, said that the local people did not like them, that they regarded the School as a place of no consequence. He said that one local man promoted visits to the cinema and games with local football teams, but that 'Boosterstown took a dim view of this'.³⁸

9.450 When well-trained, the band was a source of great pride. One complainant recalled that the band members were the only boys allowed out of the School, other than to go on the school walk on Sundays. The band was in many respects the public face of the Institution, and it would have presented a reassurance to the local people that the children in St Joseph's were receiving a very high standard of care. A follow-up letter to the Resident Manager after the 1963 Visitation remarked that the band and the dancing troupe were:

a credit to their school. Their public appearance should be sufficient answer to those who make disparaging references to Industrial Schools.

9.451 For boys who were sent to Tralee from Dublin, contact with families would have been very difficult, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s. Even boys who were from Kerry had limited contact with family members, although there was no evidence before the Committee that such contact was discouraged. In fact, one witness told the Committee how he used to visit his sisters in the local girls' industrial school across the road. This happened when he got to about 12 years of age and, when he reached 14, he was allowed over almost every Sunday.

³⁸ St Helen's was in Booterstown.

9.452 The School annals record in various years that boys went home to their families for holidays.³⁹

9.453 The fact that boys were separated from their families created major problems and had an emotional effect on the boys. They felt alienated from their roots, their family and friends, and suffered a loss of personal identity. For example, one witness told the Committee:

The biggest abuse really is being denied any information about my family. Outside, the abuse I suffered, that has gone. You have your abuse, you have your beatings, you take it and you go. But the abuse that stays with me, and it stays with me to this day, I am now 76 years of age, is that I can never prove ... I don't suppose there is one here in this room who doesn't know who their mother was, right? I never knew who my mother was and why take me away from my mother, take me away from my brother or my sister and my friends and, take me and put me away? I had done no wrong to anybody and I have been put away, sentenced to all those years for nothing.

9.454 This complainant explained how he never got to know his parents, having been put into a school in Kilkenny when he was three. He was 20 before he found out he had a brother and sister. All of the birth certificates that they had been given were wrong. This complainant told about the difficulties in meeting new people and not having a medical history. It was submitted by the Christian Brothers that these factors were the ones that have had the most impact on the former residents of industrial schools during their lives.

9.455 The Resident Manager was central to the efficient running of the School. A poor manager affected every aspect of life for the boys: the quality of food, clothing, and care deteriorated rapidly if the Manager was inadequate.

9.456 Brothers were their own arbiters as to when, where and how to punish. There were no systematic restraints on them to prevent excess. Rules and guidelines, whether provided by the State or their own Congregation, were blatantly flouted and there were no sanctions imposed on those who broke them.

9.457 Control was mainly through corporal punishment. Brothers imposed their will on the boys, and the bigger boys in turn imposed their will on the smaller ones.

9.458 Children in Tralee were susceptible to harsher treatment because they did not have parents to protect them. Troublesome Brothers, some known to be a danger to children, were posted to Tralee.

9.459 There should have been more able teachers, trained for the job of dealing with educational disadvantage, and care staff trained to look after needy children. Some complainants did, however, express their appreciation for the education they received in Tralee and, in the latter years, efforts were made to give some children second level education.

9.460 Trades offered limited opportunities and became more irrelevant and obsolete over the years. Boys worked for the school, and in the process learned little or nothing to improve their prospects in life.

9.461 Boys recalled acts of kindness very vividly, because they stood out in a world where they were not the norm. Brothers were expected to keep their distance, and boys learned to hide their distress, loneliness, fear and unhappiness.

³⁹ 67 in 1945, 70 in 1946, 90 in 1947, 90 in 1949, and 45 in 1952. In 1960, the annals note that families were willing to take boys for three to four weeks, but there was no evidence of this actually happening that year. 68 boys went on home leave in 1968.

General conclusions

- 9.462
1. The pattern of abuse in Tralee was broadly similar to that in other industrial schools for boys, particularly those operated by the Christian Brothers.
 2. Physical abuse was systemic and pervasive, and cannot be explained as a series of discrete cases of individual lapses.
 3. Abuse became a matter of concern when it threatened the interests of the Congregation but not when it endangered boys.
 4. Br Marceau's brutality continued for so long because of inept, uncaring and reckless management by the Congregation and the authorities in the institutions in which he served.
 5. Corporal punishment became physical abuse because of the excessive violence used and its general application and acceptance as a means of control of the Institution.
 6. A junior member of the Community reported Br Garon's sexual misconduct with boys to successive Superiors, and the probability is that other Brothers were also aware of his behaviour, which extended over many years . More sexual abuse could have taken place in Tralee without being reported.
 7. Br Garon's behaviour was reported. The problem was the failure or refusal by three Superiors to deal with it.
 8. Predatory physical and sexual behaviour by boys on other boys was a prominent feature of life in the Institution and a source of anxiety and pain for younger boys.
 9. The standard of physical care varied greatly depending on the capacity of the Resident Manager.
 10. Trade training offered limited opportunities and became irrelevant and obsolete over the years.
 11. Witnesses complained of a climate of fear in the Institution, of humiliation by the Brothers, the fear of sexual and physical bullying by their peers, and of the isolation experienced by children who were separated from families. A former member of the Congregation who visited Tralee briefly in the 1960s described the atmosphere as 'a secret, enclosed world, run on fear; the boys were wholly at the mercy of the staff, who seemed to have entirely negative views of them'. The boys were 'pathetically grateful' for any act of kindness.
 12. Department Inspections once again did not record the absence of a punishment book in Tralee and in one case that came to official notice Department unquestioningly accepted the proffered explanation.